Affidavit of Peggy Dixon

Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH) contractor

I. INTRODUCTION: 5

1.1 Qualifications 5

1.2 Employment at CTEH 6

1.3 East Palestine Deployment 7

1.4 Duties 8

II. ENTITIES INVOLVED & CONFLICT OF INTEREST 8

2.1 Norfolk Southern Corporation 8

2.2 Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH) 10

2.3 U.S. EPA 10

2.4. Ohio EPA 13

2.5. Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) 13

2.6. EnviroScience, Inc. (Norfolk Southern contractor) 13

2.7 Arcadis North America, Inc. (Norfolk Southern contractor) 13

2.8. Unified Command, Supporting Entities and Inadequate HASP 14

2.8. Conflicts of Interest & Policy vs. Practice 16

A. Loss of EPA Oversight 16

B. Other Minimal Enforcement, Oversight and Accountability 18

I. OSHA Interaction and Safety Violations 19

C. Client Protection, Sanitized Data and "Zero-Detection" Reports 19

III. COMPREHENSIVE COVER-UP 21

3.1. Lack of Incident Real-Time Communication 23

A. Communication Deactivated 25

3.2. Data Suppression and Fraud 26

A. Measuring PPB vs. PPM Dispute and Suppression of Air Monitoring 26

B. In-Home Testing – Instrument Limitations and Suppressed Accuracy 28

C. Unreliable Testing Equipment, Suppressed Detections & Disappearing Data . 31

D. Evacuation Ended with Flawed Process & Inadequate Equipment 34

Limiting Liability Through Instrumentation Practices 36

E. Equipment Calibration & Delayed Bump Testing Protocols 37

F. Post-Evacuation Home Testing 38

G. Acronal/Acronel and spraying soil to suppress butyl acrylate 40
I. Pesticide Ventrilix 2L usage 42
J. Qualifying, Dismissing and Misclassification of Elevated Readings 43
I. Legacy 43
II. Unrelated 45
III. CeramFab Incident 45
3.3. Community & Resident Impact 47
C. Homes Contaminated and Avoidance of Air Filter Testing 50
D. Ordered to Falsify Test Reports 51
E. Ash from Derailment Fires – Not tested. 53
3.4. Wildlife Deaths 56
3.5. Contamination Worsened 61
A. Air knifing 61
I. Sulphur Run, Evacuation Incident 62
II. Sulphur Run, Confined Space Exposure and Missing Air Monitoring Data ... 64
III. Sulphur Run, Life-Threatening Event 65
B. Sinkholes 67
C. Soil Excavation by Arcadis 69
D. Diesel (Benzene) Spill Cover-Up 70
E. Hidden or Ignored Waterways 71
F. Ohio River Downstream Contamination 72
G. 2025 Site Closure Contamination 72
H. Contaminated Waste Disposal 73
3.6. Impact to Pennsylvania 75
3.7. Workers Harmed 76
A. Inappropriate PPE 76
B. Respirator Use Restricted for "Public-Relations Optics" 78
C. Military Workers & [redacted] 80
D. Failure of Exposure Monitoring- Defective Badges or Badge Testing 81
3.8. Medical Impact to Workers 83
A. Widespread Symptoms Among Responders & Residents Mocked 83
B. Personal Medical Impact 84
3.9. Worker Retaliation 86

A. Blacklisting 86
B. High-Exposure Assignment 87
C. Lost Access 89
D. Disappearing Data 89
IV. RACE-BASED DISCRIMINATION AND DISPARATE TREATMENT 91
V. SAME STORY - DIFFERENT TOWN – MOSS LANDING 92
VI. FINAL STATEMENT 95

I, Peggy Dixon, being duly sworn, hereby state the following under penalty of perjury pursuant to the laws of the United States.

I make this affidavit freely and voluntarily to Lesley Pacey, who has identified herself as Senior Environmental Officer for the Government Accountability Project, without any threats, inducements or coercion. I am submitting this statement of my firsthand knowledge of the widespread coverup of environmental testing fraud, false and misleading data reporting, safety violations, intentional and negligent actions which worsened disaster impact to the health of communities and workers as well as worker retaliation I witnessed and experienced while working for Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), a contractor for Norfolk Southern in the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment disaster cleanup. CTEH, which became Montrose Environmental on April 14, 2020, and was rebranded in April 2026 as Onterris Inc.[1] [2] These actions, which I personally observed, were part of a coordinated effort by government and corporate entities to conceal the true environmental and public health impacts of the derailment and open burn of five vinyl chloride train cars.

In East Palestine, CTEH conducted air and surface water sampling and monitoring at the East Palestine derailment site under its Sampling and Analysis Plans which governed work-area, personal, and community sampling for contaminants including n-butyl acrylate and vinyl chloride.[3] [4] Many of the same flawed testing methodologies, data gaps, and reporting deficiencies observed during the East Palestine response were repeated during subsequent CTEH

---

[1] Onterris, "Montrose Environmental Group Is Now Onterris," accessed June 1, 2026, Montrose Environmental Group has rebranded as Onterris.

[2] Talk Business & Politics Staff, "Montrose Buys Environmental Firm CTEH of North Little Rock," *Talk Business & Politics*, April 16, 2020, https://talkbusiness.net/2020/04/montrose-buys-environmental-firm-cteh-of-north-little-rock/.

[3] Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health, LLC (CTEH), "Surface Water Sampling and Analysis Plan, East Palestine Train Derailment Site, East Palestine, OH," Version 4.3, prepared on behalf of Norfolk Southern Railway Company, June 28, 2023, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-07/Surface%20Water%20Sampling%20and%20Analysis%20Plan%20-%20EPTD.pdf.

[4] Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health, LLC (CTEH), "Air Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP), East Palestine Train Derailment Site, East Palestine, OH," Version 2.1, prepared on behalf of Norfolk Southern Railway Company, revised April 19, 2023, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-06/Air%20Sampling%20and%20Analysis%20Plan%20SAP_v2.1_20230419-508.pdf.

deployments including the January 2025 lithium-ion battery fire in Moss Landing, California.[5] This incident also affected the health of nearby residents and occurred in close proximity to protected coastal waters in a region commonly referred to as the 'Salad Bowl of the World.'"[6] [7]

I am coming forward now, providing documented evidence where possible, because the residents of East Palestine, Pennsylvania and beyond have been harmed by this derailment, the open burn, and decisions made by the involved parties during the response and remediation. They deserve to know the truth. I am haunted by the fact that I worked for a corporation that hid health harm. When I started working for CTEH, I did so to help my neighbor. I try to serve the community in a manner that I would if my own mother lived there. I understand the totality of what occurred and want to truly help the residents. They did not deserve any of this, and I can no longer carry this burden in silence every day.

I. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Qualifications

I hold Bachelor of Science degrees in both Biology and Chemistry. During my employment with CTEH, I was certified in E-Rail Safety and HAZWOPER training along with all required certifications for chemical spill responses, including updates for derailment responses on four major rail lines in the U.S. and Canada.

My training, experience and background qualified me to obtain clearances and pass Secret Service background checks for federally secured assignments, including during the COVID-19 pandemic testing at high-profile events including the Summit of the African Nations in Washington, D.C., and the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles, California. I worked directly with officials from North, Central, and South America, Caribbean, African and European nations, including presidents, vice presidents, prime ministers, and congressional staff verifying

---

[5] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Moss Landing Vistra Battery Fire Response," accessed June 22, 2026, https://www.epa.gov/ca/moss-landing-vistra-battery-fire.

[6] Wikipedia, s.v. "Salinas, California," last modified May 24, 2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salinas,_California.

[7] Government Accountability Project, "Salad Bowl Overview and Vistra Plume Deposition," June 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Salad-Bowl-Overview-and-Vistra-Plume-Deposition.pdf.

vaccination documentation, coordinating pre-entry testing protocols for limited studio audiences, and ensuring health and safety compliance at federally secured venues.

1.2 Employment at CTEH

CTEH is a corporate environmental firm providing services responsive to natural and man-made disasters.[8] [9] Norfolk Southern, the train company responsible for the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment disaster hired CTEH to perform environmental sampling during the remediation and response.[10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15]

I was employed at CTEH as an Environmental Rapid Responder and Environmental Scientist II. I served five years in this role. I was laid off on March 18, 2026, because my medical certification expired February 21, 2026. It is required by law for all workers exposed to hazardous chemicals to maintain medical certifications. I allowed the medical certification to expire because I no longer wanted to work for CTEH. I am currently unemployed and dealing with various medical issues incurred due to my work for CTEH.

---

[8] CTEH, accessed November 4, 2025, https://cteh.com/.

[9] Emily Holden, "Katrina, the BP Spill, Now Houston: This Consulting Firm Keeps Coming under Fire," *Grist*, September 13, 2017, https://grist.org/article/katrina-the-bp-spill-now-houston-this-consulting-firm-keeps-coming-under-fire/.

[10] Sharon Lerner, "The Company That Did Air Monitoring for the East Palestine Derailment Faces Scrutiny," *ProPublica*, July 13, 2023, https://www.propublica.org/article/east-palestine-ohio-norfolk-southern-cteh.

[11] Elana Schor, "Record of BP's Gulf Worker-Testing Firm Raises Questions," *New York Times*, June 18, 2010, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/06/18/18greenwire-record-of-bps-gulf-worker-testing-firm-raises-84788.html.

[12] David Michaels, Time magazine, "Conflicts of Interest Could Undermine the Cleanup Efforts in East Palestine," March 14, 2023, https://time.com/6262343/east-palestine-train-toxic-cleanup-conflicts-of-interest/.

[13] David Dayen, "The Checkered Past of the Contractor Monitoring the Air in East Palestine," *The American Prospect*, March 3, 2023, https://prospect.org/2023/03/03/2023-03-03-cteh-contractor-air-monitoring-east-palestine/.

[14] Government Accountability Project, *EPA Office of Inspector General Hotline Complaint: EPA Bias in East Palestine*, December 2024, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EPA-Office-of-Inspector-General-Hotline-Complaint-EPA-bias-in-East-Palestine.pdf.

[15] Mark Durno, "Mark Durno Recording." Recorded by East Palestine resident August 8, 2024. East Palestine, Ohio. Audio recording, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Mark_Durno_08-08-24_Recording.m4a.

Throughout my employment I received positive performance appraisals, earned an elevated rank, and was offered an industrial hygienist position in 2022. I declined it August 11, 2022 due to the "promotion" coming with a $6 an hour pay cut. To my knowledge I did not receive any formal disciplinary infractions during my employment with CTEH. However, I was verbally reprimanded on several occasions for speaking out when I inquired about questionable work practices and incidents that made me feel unsafe. In disaster incidents prior to East Palestine, clients repeatedly requested CTEH to redeploy me after witnessing my work.

During my 5 years of CTEH employment, I responded to numerous chemical incidents across the country. I have performed a wide variety of fieldwork and analytical support across numerous environments. I was regularly deployed to incidents requiring air monitoring, soil sampling, water testing, and hazardous materials response. The nature of each deployment determined the specific instruments and testing methodologies used, including SKC portable air sampling pumps, mini canisters, and more. I did community air monitoring and worker exposure tracking. I have developed a broad, field-tested understanding of environmental testing standards, regulatory requirements, and industry protocols. I am bilingual and fluent in Spanish, I also have provided both medical and environmental interpretation for communities and during Covid related assignments.

1.3 East Palestine Deployment

The East Palestine train derailment occurred on Feb 3, 2023 at 8:55pm. 38 of 151 cars derailed, with 11 derailed cars carried toxic chemicals, of which 5 containing vinyl chloride were vented and burned.[16]

I was deployed three times to East Palestine Ohio. My first deployment to East Palestine was on February 5, 2023, two days after the derailment and one day before the detonation and open burn of the chemical contents of five railcars. My first deployment continued through the end of April 2023. The second deployment was from October 25, 2024 through the end of December 2024. My third deployment was from August 30, 2025 to September 12, 2025.

[16] Rich McHugh, Devan Markham, "Toxins from Ohio train derailment spread to 16 states: Data", News Nation Now, June 20, 2024, https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/toxins-ohio-train-derailment-spread-16-states-data/.

1.4 Duties

I performed every single assignment that CTEH was responsible for in East Palestine including environmental sampling in residential and public spaces, community-level air quality testing, worksite air monitoring for occupational exposure, and support in maintaining analytical equipment and data stations. My initial task was wildlife duty for two weeks. I also performed water sampling, soil sampling, outdoor and indoor air monitoring, CTEH worker monitoring, community monitoring, and environmental monitoring in the contaminated creeks.[17] (Exhibit 2) I also performed monitoring at the frac tank farms and inspected the frac tanks that were staged for the containment of contaminated water collected from the site.

II. ENTITIES INVOLVED & CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2.1 Norfolk Southern Corporation[18] [19] [20] [21] [22]

---

[17] Rich McHugh, "East Palestine Creeks Visibly Contaminated Year After Train Derailment." NewsNation, February 2, 2024. https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/east-palestine-creeks-visibly-contaminated/.

[18] Norfolk Southern, accessed June 17, 2026, https://www.norfolksouthern.com/. Per NASDAQ and norfolksouthern.investorroom.com, NSC stock drop from February to March 2023 was loss of **$14.9 billion** in total company value. NSC rose sharply from $53.45 billion in late 2023 to $72.54 billion by mid-2026, an increase of $16.7 billion to $69.34B in market capitalization, a 31% increase over the three years with stock price of $308.75 and enterprise value of $85.84 Billion as of June 10, 2026. Macrotrends, "Norfolk Southern - 10 Year Stock Price History | NSC," accessed June 16, 2026, https://www.macrotrends.net/stocks/charts/NSC/norfolk-southern/stock-price-history.

[19] Reuters. "Norfolk Southern Shareholders Sue over Ohio Derailment." Investing.com, March 17, 2023. https://www.investing.com/news/stock-market-news/norfolk-southern-shareholders-sue-over-ohio-derailment-3033732.

[20] Jon Golinger, "Lobbying After Disaster, Norfolk Southern Corporation Lobbying Spending in the Year Since The Ohio Train Derailment and Toxic Fire", Public Citizen, January 20, 2024, https://www.citizen.org/article/lobbying-after-disaster/.

[22] Public Citizen, "Advocates Urge President Biden to Call Out Norfolk Southern's Closed Door Lobbying during Visit to East Palestine," news release, February 15, 2024, https://www.citizen.org/news/advocates-urge-president-biden-to-call-out-norfolk-southerns-closed-door-lobbying-during-visit-to-east-palestine/.

Norfolk (NSC) was the party responsible for the derailment and open burn of chemical contents of five railcars.[23] [24] [25]

Norfolk Southern funded and directed environmental assessment efforts that were fundamentally compromised and often found low or no detections of chemicals of concern.[26] [27] (Exhibit 11). I witnessed Norfolk Southern's contractors' efforts to silence field workers, hide evidence of terrestrial animal deaths including raccoons, beavers, cats and deer, and direct the concealment of key findings.[28]

Starting February 4, the EPA worked with Norfolk Southern's contractor CTEH to monitor outdoor air for particulate matter and 79 chemicals, and CTEH tested the creeks' surface waters and sediments for VOCs and SVOCs while monitoring the sheens along Sulphur and Leslie Runs. CTEH also ran the indoor home air-screening program and the residential hotline. The Arkansas-based company tested more than 631 homes and businesses in East Palestine.[29]

---

[23] The 900,000 pounds of chemical contents, as of March 2023 already resulted in at least 700 tons of contaminated soil and 1.8 million gallons of wastewater sent to Houston, Texas, Grafton and East Liverpool, Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. Becky Sullivan, "Here's why it's hard to clean up toxic waste from East Palestine train derailment", March 3, 2023, accessed June 17, 2026, https://www.npr.org/2023/03/03/1160481769/east-palestine-derailment-toxic-waste-cleanup.

[24] "Testifying before the U.S. Senate in 2024, National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy said that "vent and burn" was not necessary." Dave Nethers, "Dewine said he wasn't given all the facts before authorizing controlled burn after East Palestine derailment, accessed June 17, 2026, https://fox8.com/news/dewine-said-he-wasnt-given-all-the-facts-before-authorizing-controlled-burn-after-east-palestine-derailment/

[25] OxyVinyls—the OxyChem affiliate that manufactured the vinyl chloride carried on the Norfolk Southern train, repeatedly told the Unified Command burn was unnecessary. Priyanka Runwal, "OxyVinyls will contribute to the $600 million settlement in the East Palestine train derailment case", Chemical & Engineering News, Accessed June 17, 2026, https://cen.acs.org/environment/OxyVinyls-contribute-600-million-settlement/103/web/2025/04.

[26] Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), *Indoor Air Monitoring Results — East Palestine, Ohio Train Derailment*, obtained via Freedom of Information Act request, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency SEMSPUB Document No. 985346, 2023, https://semspub.epa.gov/work/05/985346.pdf.

[27] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Report on City Hall Filling in Hole in Map Room Before Operation*s, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CTEH-Report-on-City-Hall-filling-in-hole-in-map-room-before-operations-.jpeg.

[28] Government Accountability Project, *New Documents Reveal Deep Flaws in Norfolk Southern's Dioxin Soil Sampling Plan*, Press Release, February 3, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/press/new-documents-reveal-deep-flaws-in-norfolk-southerns-dioxin-soil-sampling-plan/.

[29] Priyanka Runwal, "Visiting East Palestine 1 Year Later," *Chemical & Engineering News*, February 26, 2024, https://cen.acs.org/environment/Visiting-East-Palestine-1-year-later/102/i6.

2.2 Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH)

I was employed by CTEH, which was contracted by Norfolk Southern to conduct environmental testing and sampling after the February 3, 2023, train derailment in East Palestine.[30] CTEH management repeatedly cut corners, raised chemical detection limits, and performed improper sampling techniques to avoid reporting detections of hazardous substances.[31] [32] These actions were not isolated; they were part of a pattern of fraudulent reporting and intentional data manipulation and suppression.

[redacted] was the main project manager for CTEH for the East Palestine derailment and [redacted] was the CTEH Day Shift Site Lead.[33] [redacted] was a CTEH toxicologist deployed to East Palestine.[34] [redacted] was the other CTEH toxicologist at the derailment.[35] They were the only two on site toxicologists.

2.3 U.S. EPA[36]

---

[30] CTEH is part of Montrose Environmental Group (MEG),rebranded in 2026 under Onterris (ONT) stock traded on NYSE. Stock fell roughly 67% over the past five years and over 37% in the six months leading into 2023, net loss of $30.9 million for 2023 but by 2026 it had rebounded strongly. 2023 revenue: $696.4 million. 2026 projected revenue (midpoint): $860.18 million. See: Stock Titan, "Onterris Q1 2026 revenue dips as loss narrows | MEG Quarterly Report (10-Q)", Accessed June 17, 2026, www.StockTitan.net/sec-filings/MEG/10-q-montrose-environmental-group-inc-quarterly-earnings-report-64fe51c909b9.html.

[31] [redacted] "Affidavit of [redacted] Regarding the Environmental Response to the Train Derailment in East Palestine on February 3, 2023." Confidential disclosure to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, February 24, 2025. [redacted]

[32] Government Accountability Project, *Uncovered EPA Letter Reveals EPA Negligence in Allowing Flawed Norfolk Southern Testing in East Palestine*, Press Release, July 15, 2025, https://whistleblower.org/press/uncovered-epa-letter-reveals-epa-negligence-in-allowing-flawed-norfolk-southern-testing-in-east-palestine/.

[33] See: LinkedIn Profiles: [redacted] Both have been promoted since the East Palestine disaster.

[34] [redacted] LinkedIn, accessed August 18, 2026, [redacted]

[35] [redacted] LinkedIn profile, accessed June 26, 2026, [redacted]

[36] Government Accountability Project, *The Washington Examiner: East Palestine, Ohio: A Town Failed by the EPA*, February 3, 2025, https://whistleblower.org/in-the-news/the-washington-examiner-east-palestine-ohio-a-town-failed-by-the-epa/.

I witnessed the EPA directly participating in and turning a blind eye to fraudulent testing practices by CTEH.[37] I observed EPA officials reviewing and accepting altered data, failing to disclose elevated chemical readings, and suppressing contamination evidence.[38] [39] The EPA also violated its own statutes, allowing Norfolk Southern and its contractors to open burn these chemicals when it was not necessary.[40]

I attended meetings and briefings where EPA staff coordinated closely with Norfolk Southern and CTEH, and I saw firsthand how they shaped public messaging to downplay contamination.[41] [42] [43]

---

[37] [redacted] "Affidavit of [redacted] Regarding the Environmental Response to the Train Derailment in East Palestine on February 3, 2023." Confidential disclosure to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, February 24, 2025. [redacted]

[38] Government Accountability Project, *Uncovered EPA Letter Reveals EPA Negligence in Allowing Flawed Norfolk Southern Testing in East Palestine*, Press Release, July 15, 2025, https://whistleblower.org/press/uncovered-epa-letter-reveals-epa-negligence-in-allowing-flawed-norfolk-southern-testing-in-east-palestine/.

[39] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. FOIA Partial Denial Response Letter: Dioxin Sampling, Request No. 2023-R5-06256. Washington, DC: EPA Region 5, November 2025. https://whistleblower.org/wpcontent/uploads/2025/11/Dioxin-EPA-FOIA-Partial-Denial-Response-Letter-2023-R5-06256-Final-c.pdf.

[40] Dave Nethers, "DeWine Said He Wasn't Given All the Facts before Authorizing Controlled Burn after East Palestine Derailment," FOX 8 News (Cleveland), August 29, 2025, https://fox8.com/news/dewine-said-he-wasnt-given-all-the-facts-before-authorizing-controlled-burn-after-east-palestine-derailment/.

[41] Government Accountability Project, *EPA Officials' Recorded Admissions Prompts Investigation Request in East Palestine*, press release, December 12, 2024, https://whistleblower.org/press-release/epa-officials-recorded-admissions-prompts-investigation-request-in-east-palestine/.

[42] Scott Smith. *Declaration of Scott Smith*. Government Accountability Project, September 23, 2024. https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Declaration-of-Scott-Smith.pdf.

[43] Jordan Chariton, Exclusive Audio: EPA Official admits Norfolk Southern Misled Ohio and Pennsylvania Residents that Air Was Safe After Derailment, Chemical Detonation, accessed June 17, 2026, https://www.statuscoupsubstack.com/p/exclusive-audio-epa-official-admits.

Additionally, it was later made public that EPA delayed deployment and shut off chemical sensors on its chemical sensing plane over the contaminated creeks.[44] [45] [46] [47] [48] (Exhibit 2)

Note: EPA's own records contradict its public reassurances that there was no significant chemical contamination based on several factors including six elevated TCDD dioxin levels reported as background sample "outliers" in the Arcadis/Norfolk Southern Phase 1 Dioxin Soil Sampling Plan. For example, the sampling report included a maximum concentration of 2,3,7,8 TCDD dioxin, the most dangerous dioxin congener, at of 607 parts per trillion, which is more than 126 times above the EPA's 4.8 ppt Regional Screening Level (RSL) health benchmark for dioxin.[49]

Based on my observations, the EPA did not consistently act in accordance with its intended purpose. Across deployments, I observed the degree to which the EPA acquiesced depended on which state we were operating in. State environmental agencies vary considerably — Ohio and California, for example, are very different — and the federal response likewise varies by Regional Office. EPA actions also depended on who the party responsible was.

---

[44] Government Accountability Project, "Whistleblower: EPA Failed to Deploy Critical Airborne Technology During East Palestine Disaster," Press Release, whistleblower.org, accessed May 13, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/press-release/whistleblower-epa-failed-to-deploy-critical-airborne-technology-during-east-palestine-disaster/.

[45] Stephen Petty, "Assertions That East Palestine Residents Can Expect No Long-Term Health Impacts Lack Scientific Support," *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, republished by Government Accountability Project, March 19, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/in-the-news/new-solutions-a-journal-of-environmental-and-occupational-health-policy-assertions-that-east-palestine-residents-can-expect-no-long-term-health-impacts-lack-scientific-support/.

[46] Government Accountability Project, "Response to EPA Rebuttal Against Whistleblower Claims," June 27, 2024, https://whistleblower.org/press-release/response-to-epa-rebuttal-against-whistleblower-claims/.

[47] McHugh, Rich. "East Palestine Creeks Visibly Contaminated Year After Train Derailment." NewsNation, February 2, 2024. https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/east-palestine-creeks-visibly-contaminated/

[48] Declaration: Contamination Remains in East Palestine Ohio Stream Banks, Anonymous Proffer, Government Accountability Project, September 24, 2024. https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/AnonymousDeclaration-Contaminated-Creeks-in-East-Palestine.pdf.

[49] Environmental Protection Agency. "Summary of Phase 1 Dioxin Results for the East Palestine Derailment Incident." September 14, 2023. https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-10/phase-1-soil-sampling-technical-memo-20230914pdf.pdf

2.4. Ohio EPA

Ohio EPA officials along with CTEH, misclassified air readings for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) in the creeks, which happened at least a dozen times during my deployments. The readings were classified as legacy contamination or another source – not attributed to Norfolk Southern. Additionally, the Ohio EPA did not express concerns or impede the harms caused by the remediation work to the Pennsylvania side of the derailment.

2.5. Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)

ODNR participated in the cover-up of ecological damage and wildlife deaths.[50] ODNR instructed contractors not to report or discuss the deaths of wildlife animals following the derailment.

2.6. EnviroScience, Inc. (Norfolk Southern contractor)[51] [52] [53]

EnviroScience was responsible for the removal of dead wildlife.

2.7 Arcadis North America, Inc. (Norfolk Southern contractor)[54]

Arcadis prepared a Remedial Action Work Plan and was responsible for soil testing and removal of contaminated soil, (which was transported to Lordstown, Ohio as a temporary transfer

---

[50] "ODNR: No Reports of Dying Animals in East Palestine," *The Review*, February 10, 2023, https://www.reviewonline.com/uncategorized/2023/02/odnr-no-reports-of-dying-animals-in-east-palestine/.

[51] EnviroScience, Inc., "EnviroScience, Inc. | Leaders in Environmental Consulting," accessed June 22, 2026, https://www.enviroscienceinc.com/.

[52] Ohio Department of Natural Resources, "Update on East Palestine Train Derailment Impact to Wildlife," news release, February 23, 2023, https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/update-east-palestine-train-derailment-impact-wildlife-odnr.

[53] EnviroScience, Inc. "Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA)." Accessed June 22, 2026. https://www.enviroscienceinc.com/services/emergency-response/natural-resource-damage-assessment-nrda/.

[54] Arcadis North America, Inc., Accessed June 17, 2026, https://www.arcadis.com/en. Arcadis NV (ARCAY) is traded on Nasdaq.

point).[55] [56] [57] [58] However, based on my observations and conversations with other personnel involved in the response, the actual handling of these materials appeared to involve a level of secrecy and inconsistency that raises serious questions as the material was shipped to multiple states.[59] [60]

2.8. Unified Command, Supporting Entities and Inadequate HASP[61] [62]

The formal Unified Command consisted of five members: the U.S. EPA (which led the longer-term cleanup phase), the Ohio EPA, the Columbiana County Emergency Management Agency, the Village of East Palestine, and Norfolk Southern Corporation. In the first days after the derailment, the response was led locally by East Palestine Fire Chief [redacted] before EPA formalized the structure around February 21–22, 2023.

---

[55] Arcadis U.S., Inc., "Preliminary Remedial Action Work Plan, Norfolk Southern East Palestine, Ohio, Derailment Site," letter to Kurt Kollar, On-Scene Coordinator, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, February 10, 2023, Scribd, https://www.scribd.com/document/625614802/East-Palestine-RAWP-Feb-10-2023.

[56] Arcadis U.S., Inc., "Main Line Interim Soil Removal Plan," Rev. 4.2, prepared for Norfolk Southern Railway Company, June 6, 2023, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-06/Main%20Line%20Interim%20Soil%20Removal%20Plan_Rev%2042-508.pdf.

[57] Nadine Grimley, "Lordstown Mayor on Waste Transfer Point: 'We Can't Stop This Now'," *WKBN*, February 2023, https://www.wkbn.com/news/local-news/east-palestine-train-derailment/lordstown-mayor-on-waste-transfer-point-we-cant-stop-this-now/.

[58] Zach Mosca, "Lordstown Landfill Not Accepting Contaminated Soil from East Palestine," *WFMJ*, February 2023, https://www.wfmj.com/story/48422913/lordstown-landfill-not-accepting-contaminated-soil-from-east-palestine.

[59] Becky Sullivan, "Here's why it's hard to clean up toxic waste from the East Palestine train derailment", NPR Environment, March 3, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2023/03/03/1160481769/east-palestine-derailment-toxic-waste-cleanup.

[60] Jen Rice, "Harris County to receive more hazardous waste from Ohio trail derailment site, Hidalgo says", Houston Chronicle, Updated February 18, 2023, https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/houston/article/harris-county-get-hazardous-waste-ohio-train-17811364.php.

[61] Government Accountability Project, *Experts Raise Concerns After EPA Says It Used Acronel WS-27 in East Palestine*, press release, accessed [date], https://whistleblower.org/press/experts-raise-concerns-after-epa-says-it-used-acronel-ws-27-in-east-palestine/.

[62] Government Accountability Project, *Government Accountability Project Uncovers EPA-Backed Chemical Suppression in East Palestine Response Plan*, press release, accessed [date], https://whistleblower.org/press/government-accountability-project-uncovers-epa-backed-chemical-suppression-in-east-palestine-response-plan/.

A wider circle of cooperating and assisting agencies supported the response without being formal decision-makers, including FEMA, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and its Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), OSHA, NIH, HHS, USDA, the Ohio EMA, the Ohio and Pennsylvania departments of health, the Pennsylvania DEP, ORSANCO, and the Columbiana County General Health District.

Norfolk Southern's main contractors on site were CTEH (air monitoring), Specialized Professional Services of Washington, Pennsylvania, Arcadis, EnviroScience, and HEPACO of Charlotte, North Carolina, Tetra Tech, plus specialist firms certified by the Chlorine Institute who advised on the vent-and-burn decision.

The EPA and CTEH co-authored the Health and Safety Plan (HASP v2.0, dated March 29, 2023) for East Palestine, a site-specific document that outlines the potential hazards of an environmental response, and the procedures, protective equipment, and emergency protocols workers must follow to stay safe[63] (Exhibit 3) The HASP was jointly signed and approved by representatives from the following entities:

- U.S. EPA (Region 3 and Region 5)
- Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH)
- Ohio EPA
- Norfolk Southern Corporation
- Columbiana County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)
- East Palestine Fire Department

By signing the HASP, each of these entities formally approved the scope of work, protective protocols, and risk assessment methodologies, including decisions that limited protective gear to Level D PPE, restricted residential sampling, deprioritized hazardous soil exposure, and omitted airborne dioxin monitoring (Exhibit 4). Their signatures reflect a shared responsibility for the

[63] Shanna Horvatin and Scott Skelton, "East Palestine Train Derailment Site Unified Command Group Health and Safety Plan", version 2.0 (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and CTEH), https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPURL.cgi?Dockey=P101DL03.txt.

intentional concealment, data fraud, negligent actions which worsened the disaster and impact to communities and workers, remediation inadequacies that left workers and residents unprotected.[64]

2.8. Conflicts of Interest & Policy vs. Practice

A. Loss of EPA Oversight

Patterns of manipulation and misrepresentation might have been challenged under normal circumstances, but in this case, federal agency oversight was unusually absent, strange and distinct from other experiences when it came to oversight of CTEH and ensuring scientific integrity. In past incidents I've worked, the EPA on occasion came down hard on contractors, questioning everything, and demanding justification for each data point. Often, they'd challenge us, push for accountability, and wouldn't hesitate to "tear a contractor a new one" when standards weren't met. But in East Palestine, the EPA was only critical of CTEH at the start of the response when it challenged CTEH for using Parts Per Million (PPM) vs. Parts Per Billion (PPB) method detection limits during in-home testing work.

EPA Calibration Concerns and Attempt to Take Over Testing

At one point, the EPA began questioning the calibration and instrumentation of the contractor teams, which I believe was part of their effort to take over control of air monitoring and sampling operations. The Ohio EPA, in particular, seemed eager to assert dominance over the entire response. From what I witnessed, they didn't have the manpower, equipment, or data infrastructure to handle the scope of testing and reporting that had already been established. CTEH had systems in place—phone numbers, reporting tools, and staff—that EPA simply lacked. Still, it appeared to be more about control and credit than public safety. This event seemed like a "career moment" for some Ohio EPA officials, and they pushed hard to become the lead agency despite being ill-equipped to actually carry out the task.

The EPA also attempted to take control of the in-home air quality testing effort after CTEH had already established procedures. They didn't have hotlines, tracking systems, or a method to handle the incoming data. CTEH had a fully operational system with both local and national

[64] *Ibid.*

contact numbers and a data infrastructure for handling results. Ultimately, they couldn't take over because they didn't have the personnel, data analysts, or equipment in place to manage it.

Although CTEH initially described itself as an "independent" contractor, it quickly became clear that the client, Norfolk Southern, had full control over decisions. CTEH's responsibility was ultimately to Norfolk Southern, not EPA or the Unified Command.

At first, EPA strongly pushed back against CTEH's methods, particularly in the early weeks when home air testing began. Both agencies initially shared workspace in the basement of a local church. The disagreements became so heated that they eventually split into separate offices — CTEH (with Arcadis and EnviroScience) moved upstairs, and EPA relocated down the hall. CTEH claimed that proximity to EPA equipment could "confuse calibration gases," but in my view, that was just a pretext to separate from EPA oversight. When EPA raised questions about testing sensitivity or data interpretation, those inquiries didn't result in operational changes.

From my perspective, Norfolk Southern's influence effectively overrode any independent oversight that EPA might have had.

After the first few weeks, EPA ended its occasional challenges to decisions made by Norfolk Southern or their contractors, even when the community continued to express concerns about health symptoms and contamination. EPA's reduced presence and the growing cooperation between all the contractors, including CTEH, Arcadis, EnviroScience and Norfolk Southern, gave the impression that accountability had diminished.

EPA's focus early on was to prevent contamination spread — such as by requiring street washing, boot cleaning stations, and truck washing, etc. — to avoid cross-contamination between the site and residential areas. These were reasonable measures, but inconsistent. For example, if the truck washing station was out of water, or there was no one working in that area, the truck would keep rolling without being washed.

I had hoped the EPA would provide the independent oversight we needed, especially since they had better equipment and the ability to do their own tests. But instead, they defaulted to the contractor's data using parts per million and didn't even publish their own findings at the higher more sensitive detection level of parts per billion. It felt like they stepped back just enough to

avoid accountability, and that left residents and responders relying on flawed or outright false information. I lost a lot of faith in EPA as a result.

Even though EPA is supposed to function independently, they began relying on CTEH's data rather than conducting their own parallel sampling, and later even shared field teams and vehicles with CTEH. Also, I personally saw EPA and CTEH staff working together on the community air monitoring bus, which was very unusual and inconsistent with EPA's typical independent verification role by having their own air monitoring bus and taking their own independent readings. In previous disasters to which I was deployed, EPA did a better job of verifying the quality of CTEH's environmental sampling in terms of the accuracy of the testing equipment, whether it was calibrated properly or whether it was sensitive enough to detect chemicals. In East Palestine it was a pissing contest on how things were going to go, who called the shots and most importantly, who received the credit.

Over time, the tension appeared to dissolve, not because issues were resolved, but because EPA stopped pushing back. After about a month, it seemed like EPA and Norfolk Southern were aligned. EPA stopped holding contractors accountable with the same intensity as in the first few weeks. For instance, early on they would demand corrective action for safety or environmental violations (like missing secondary containment under generators), but later they looked the other way unless the Coast Guard called it out first.

Ultimately, it felt like everyone - the EPA included - was playing the same game of plausible deniability. Like if we all closed our eyes and plugged our ears at the same time, we could claim we didn't know what was really going on. That silence and inaction spoke volumes. It was the opposite of how these situations usually go.

B. *Other Minimal Enforcement, Oversight and Accountability*

The same absence occurred with other federal agencies in East Palestine. In previous smaller-scale events, I've seen FEMA and other emergency management agencies at least make an appearance, taking photos, documenting conditions, asking questions, and preparing follow-up. But in East Palestine, that kind of interagency involvement was largely nonexistent. I kept wondering: Where is everyone? Why is no one stepping in to scrutinize this disaster? Why is no one even pretending to be watching?

I. OSHA Interaction and Safety Violations

When OSHA first arrived in East Palestine, they were very aggressive in their enforcement. I had a direct and uncomfortable encounter with an OSHA official [redacted] who singled me out because of my role monitoring air for the air knife team. He launched numerous accusations and demanded answers I wasn't qualified or authorized to provide. The situation escalated to the point that my project manager had to contact his superior, and soon high-level representatives from all companies on-site were called into an emergency briefing. CTEH later told me I had done nothing wrong, and while I respect OSHA's role, it was clear their presence was focused on issuing fines rather than gathering accurate information.

In August 2023, OSHA fined Norfolk Southern $49,000 for serious worker safety violations in East Palestine.[65] Norfolk Southern did not dispute or contest the violations. OSHA found the company failed to inform workers about hazardous chemicals spilled at the site, did not establish decontamination zones, and failed to ensure workers wore appropriate chemical resistant footwear. Inspectors also documented that Norfolk Southern did not develop an adequate emergency response plan with clear lines of authority and training, allowed employees to perform tasks such as pouring cement on potentially contaminated soil without proper respiratory protection, and generally failed to train workers on hazardous chemical risks.

These citations and the penalties reinforce what I experienced in terms of systemic safety breakdowns in chemical hazard- management and responder protection in East Palestine.[47]

Even the public pressure faded. Some activist groups initially got involved, but then many of them went quiet or disappeared altogether. It all felt coordinated, like a collective decision to stay hands-off.

C. *Client Protection,* Sanitized Data and "Zero-Detection" Reports

Throughout my time at CTEH, the work was framed around serving the client. CTEH consistently referred to the party that retained us as "our client," and the emphasis was always on

[65] Patrick Damp, "Norfolk Southern to pay thousands in fines following inspection in East Palestine", August 10, 2023, CBS News Pittsburgh, https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/norfolk-southern-to-pay-thousands-in-fines-following-osha-inspection-in-east-palestine/.

serving that client's interests, not the impacted communities. At East Palestine, this dynamic was exponentially worse than anything I previously experienced.

There were two or three project managers whom I respected and valued working with, because they did not manipulate how the data came out. To them, the data was the data, and they let the results fall where they fell. CTEH's remaining project managers were, in my observation, entirely devoted to the client's interests. To make matters worse, contractors seemed to be gaming the system. They were the ones doing most of the sampling, and they worked for the responsible party, so they had a vested interest in showing "safe" results. Even when more sensitive equipment like the Dräger monitor was available, which could detect a much wider range of contaminants, it wasn't used consistently or to break ties when there were discrepancies in data.

I had previously understood CTEH's role to be that of an independent third party: the entity that stood between the responsible party and the EPA serving as a neutral tiebreaker. Per company mission and policies, our work was supposed to be honest, and the data was supposed to accurately reflect the science and tests. However, in practice, the objective was to reach zero — that is, to produce testing records of non-detection of contamination.

Some project managers in particular exemplified this. They made it clear to us that if we were recording too many detections, the implication was that we did not know how to operate our equipment and would be sent home. The pressure was open and explicit. Project managers directly told us that they needed zeros, instructed us to go out and get the zeros, and stated that zero was the most important number to them. We were constantly told by CTEH managers, *"those zeros are the most important thing."* They would emphasize that going out there and getting those non-detect readings was critical. They emphasized that we wanted zeros in our reports — zero Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), zero analytes, zero contamination. But zeros didn't match what we were experiencing on the ground. In reality, zeros weren't evidence of safety. They were a marketing and liability defense strategy for the client, Norfolk Southern.

Internally, CTEH circulated a site-location map listing numerous hazardous chemicals that were never disclosed to the public. The report titled CTEH's *Air Knifing Operations Assessment and*

Data Summary under-reported both the number of samples collected, and the number of detections recorded.[66]

All CTEH workers understood that those numbers would be used later in court. Directives were framed around plausible deniability and litigation shielding, not public health. We mapped the locations where samples were taken and color-coded the results. Green indicated no detection of contamination. The managers wanted all green points on the map. A map covered in green dots is an extremely powerful visual for a jury and a judge. It conveys to a community and to a court that nothing harmful was present in the air. When community members later bring claims arising from a spill that has affected them, such a map can be used to defeat those claims by suggesting there was nothing there to begin with. Based on my experience, the practice of driving toward zero and producing maps of green dots is a regular business practice at CTEH.

III. COMPREHENSIVE COVER-UP

During my various chemical spill deployments for CTEH, I personally observed a consistent pattern where CTEH employed multiple methods to game the system with the goal of finding no or low detections for contaminants of concern. I was unaware of this institutionalized practice of concealment.[67] But after working for CTEH, it became clear that their standard operating procedure in all chemical disasters was to limit chemical detections to reduce liability for the responsible party that paid us. In fact, management was not worried about negative publicity, joking every time a news article came out about CTEH's questionable testing practices it was a form of "free advertising" because corporate polluters knew they could count on CTEH to hide detections. But when it came to East Palestine, CTEH escalated the deception beyond anything I experienced before, or since.

CTEH by no means acted alone in this massive human health coverup in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved all CTEH work plans, sampling

---

[66] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Air Knifing Data Summary*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Air-Knifing-Data-Summary.pdf.

[67] Government Accountability Project, *Notarized Affidavit of* [redacted] *Regarding Instructions Not to Report Detections during the Deepwater Horizon Spill*, referenced in *Deep Impact: Ongoing Vulnerabilities in Oil Spills from the Deadly Dispersant Corexit* (April 2024), https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Redacted-Affidavit-with-CTEH.pdf.

summaries and reports. The EPA, the Ohio EPA, Norfolk Southern Corporation, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), and other Norfolk Southern contractors were complicit, participating in the coverup.[68] [69] [70] [71] [72] [73] [74] [75] [76] [77] [78] [79] [80]

---

[68] CTEH, *Sampling and Analysis Plan for East Palestine*, version 2.1, prepared for Norfolk Southern, approved by EPA Region 5 Incident Commander Ralph Dollhopf, April 19, 2023, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-06/Air%20Sampling%20and%20Analysis%20Plan%20SAP_v2.1_20230419-508.pdf.

[69] Government Accountability Project, *New Documents Reveal Deep Flaws in Norfolk Southern's Dioxin Soil Sampling Plan*, press release, February 3, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/press/new-documents-reveal-deep-flaws-in-norfolk-southerns-dioxin-soil-sampling-plan/.

[70] Stephen Petty, "Assertions That East Palestine Residents Can Expect No Long-Term Health Impacts Lack Scientific Support," *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, republished by Government Accountability Project, March 19, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/in-the-news/new-solutions-a-journal-of-environmental-and-occupational-health-policy-assertions-that-east-palestine-residents-can-expect-no-long-term-health-impacts-lack-scientific-support/.

[71] Government Accountability Project, *Whistleblowers and Scientists Express Concern in Two New Federal Government Challenges for East Palestine with Latest Disclosures*, press release, September 24, 2024, https://whistleblower.org/press/whistleblowers-and-scientists-express-concern-in-two-new-federal-government-challenges-for-east-palestine-with-latest-disclosures/.

[72] Government Accountability Project, *District Judge Grants Motion to Intervene in Federal Consent Decree Against Norfolk Southern*, press release, March 9, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/east-palestine/district-judge-grants-motion-to-intervene-in-federal-consent-decree-against-norfolk-southern/.

[73] Scott Smith, "Declaration of Scott Smith," Government Accountability Project, September 2024, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Declaration-of-Scott-Smith.pdf.

[74] Stephen Lester and Mihir Vohra, "Assessment of Arcadis Dioxin Soil Sampling Plans in East Palestine," Center for Health, Environment and Justice, October 17, 2023, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CHEJ-Analysis-of-EPA-Dioxin-Testing-in-East-Palestine-OH-2.pdf.

[75] David Michaels, "Conflicts of Interest Could Undermine East Palestine Cleanup," *TIME*, March 16, 2023, https://time.com/6262343/east-palestine-train-toxic-cleanup-conflicts-of-interest/.

[76] Scott Smith, "Are Remediation Efforts Effective in the East Palestine Disaster Cleanup? & Updated Testing Trend Summaries," Blue Shirt Justice League, February 1, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Key-Testing-Slides-Scott-Smith-Summary-2-1-26.pdf.

[77] "Scientist Shares New Testing Results on East Palestine Derailment," WKBN, November 18, 2025, reposted by Government Accountability Project, https://whistleblower.org/in-the-news/wkbn-scientist-shares-new-testing-results-on-east-palestine-derailment/.

[78] Lesley Pacey, "Executive Summary: New FOIA Documents Reveal Additional Concerns about Norfolk Southern's Dioxin Soil Sampling Plan — Evidence Casts Further Doubt on Dioxin Soil Sampling Results Three Years after the East Palestine Train Derailment," Government Accountability Project, February 3, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Executive-Summary-of-Dioxin-FOIA-Technical-Document.pdf.

3.1. Lack of Incident Real-Time Communication

From the very beginning of the East Palestine response, I noticed irregularities in how incident command and data monitoring was handled. I have participated in numerous large-scale environmental responses before, including refinery explosions and wellhead blowouts, so I was familiar with how real-time monitoring and incident command are typically structured. Normally, CTEH sets up a full incident command post with real-time monitoring displays visible to all responders, so they know what they are dealing with.

In East Palestine, Incident Command, also known as Unified Command, and supporting federal agencies played significant health-monitoring and support roles - particularly the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its component the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) - which supported the public-health response in the community.

At other large disasters, readings from instruments testing for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and lower explosive limits (LELs), for example, are displayed in real time on monitors inside the command center, allowing any workers present to observe the data. This setup ensures transparency and safety. If any analyte level rises, everyone sees it immediately and can respond.

This lack of transparency stood in contrast to other prior incidents I worked where CTEH, EPA, and the client all had access to live data. In East Palestine, the data stayed within CTEH's control and Norfolk Southern's oversight. It was clear to me in East Palestine that CTEH was keeping critical information tightly controlled and suppressed. Questions had to be asked multiple times in different ways before, even as CTEH employees, we got straightforward answers about what the readings were showing or how equipment was calibrated.

In East Palestine, the first few weeks or so after the derailment, instead of establishing a central monitoring hub with visible data for the rest of other agencies, CTEH initially had the

---

[79] Scott Smith, "Are Remediation Efforts Effective in the East Palestine Disaster Cleanup? & Updated Testing Trend Summaries," Blue Shirt Justice League, February 1, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Key-Testing-Slides-Scott-Smith-Summary-2-1-26.pdf.

[80] "Scientist Shares New Testing Results on East Palestine Derailment," WKBN, November 18, 2025, reposted by Government Accountability Project, https://whistleblower.org/in-the-news/wkbn-scientist-shares-new-testing-results-on-east-palestine-derailment/.

monitoring software called *ProRAE* or *Safety Suite* running from a laptop in a pickup truck. Later, it was moved to a private command trailer manned only by CTEH. Still, no one from EPA or other agencies had access to that real-time feed. With few exceptions, a setup like that (monitoring from a vehicle) is used only for small, remote responses where there's no infrastructure like a gas well in the middle of cornfields, not for a wide ranging, multi-state, multi-year environmental disaster. I found it very odd that we had no visible, centralized real-time data anywhere at the schools, churches, or command locations where teams were stationed. I later reviewed an official After-Action Report on the incident, which confirmed that the on-scene incident command and staging arrangements were deficient. The report stated, "Without an incident command location, companies arrived on scene and had to seek out assignments."[81]

Throughout the response, CTEH appeared to keep information tightly controlled and not openly shared with the Unified Command members. I never saw EPA personnel given access to real-time readings.

Unlike previous deployments, we had to press to gain access to the incident Health and Safety Plan (HASP). We only were able to get it because one employee repeatedly asked for it and then shared it with us. The document was eventually posted on the internet by EPA.[82]

The *East Palestine Train Derailment Health and Safety Plan (HASP), (Version 2.0*, dated March 29, 2023), contained no provisions governing how CTEH must physically operate its monitoring teams, such as whether monitoring should occur from a truck, trailer, temporary shelter, or within Unified Command.[83] It also did not include any requirements specifying how, when, or to whom CTEH must share environmental monitoring data.[84] The only directive regarding monitoring records instructs personnel to "keep records in a secure location," and the HASP provides *no mandate* that such records be transmitted to EPA, Ohio EPA, or Unified Command, nor any

---

[81] Village of East Palestine, Ohio. *East Palestine Train Derailment After-Action Report and Improvement Plan (Final Report)*. 8 Aug. 2024. East Palestine, OH: Village of East Palestine.https://epohio.org/wp-content/uploads/East-PalestineOH_Train-Derailment-AAR-IP-Report_09AUG2024_Final.pdf.

[82] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *East Palestine Train Derailment Site-Specific Health and Safety Plan*, March 30, 2023, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/Health%20%20Safety%20Plan%20EPTD%2020230330.pdf.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *Ibid.*

requirement for real-time data sharing or integrated situational awareness.) (HASP v2.0, "Environmental and Personal Monitoring," p. 17).[85] [86] [87]

CTEH's standard practice is to defer to the Responsible Party (RP), the company that hires and pays them, for parameters governing data access, release, and sharing. (This practice has been documented in multiple federal oversight reviews of contractor-managed environmental responses, including congressional hearings on the British Petroleum *Deepwater Horizon* disaster, where investigators found that contractor-generated data, including CTEH sampling results, flowed first through BP's command structure before being made available to federal agencies.[88] [89] Federal analyses have repeatedly noted similar patterns, highlighting that contractor data often routes through the RP rather than Unified Command, thereby limiting transparency and timely government oversight.)[90]

A. Communication Deactivated

At the start of the response, CTEH used a Slack communication channel dedicated to the East Palestine response (Exhibit 15). That channel is like a group chat or message board used for

---

[85] *Ibid.*

[86] Government Accountability Project, *Government Accountability Project Uncovers EPA-Backed Chemical Suppression in East Palestine Response Plan*, press release, January 13, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/press/government-accountability-project-uncovers-epa-backed-chemical-suppression-in-east-palestine-response-plan/.

[87] Government Accountability Project, *Experts Raise Concerns After EPA Says It Used Acronel WS-27 in East Palestine*, press release, January 29, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/press/experts-raise-concerns-after-epa-says-it-used-acronel-ws-27-in-east-palestine/.

[88] Lois Capps and Peter Welch to Tony Hayward, Chief Executive Officer, BP, June 25, 2010, regarding the Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), https://www.noozhawk.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/06_25_CAPPS_WELCH_letter_to_BP-CTEH_concerns.pdf

[89] Capps, Lois, and Peter Welch. Letter to Tony Hayward, Chief Executive Officer, BP, June 25, 2010. Reported in Jason Millman, "Lawmakers Request BP Stop Using Controversial Firm in Public Health Response." *The Hill*, June 2010. https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/164953-lawmakers-request-bp-stop-using-controversial-firm-in-public-health-response/.

[90] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Inspector General, "EPA's Emergency Response and Oversight of Contractor-Provided Data", various reports addressing contractor data transparency; see also U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, *Failure of Oversight in Industrial Disasters*, oversight summary documents (2010–2020).

coordination and data sharing within the company. Suddenly, [redacted] instructed us to no longer use the Slack channel.

This occurred shortly after the class action settlement began moving quickly through the system.[91] No one at my level was told why the channel's usage was to be discontinued. The replacement system for internal communications became group text, which was separate for day and night shift. The only other source of information for us working in the field in East Palestine was CTEH morning shift change safety meetings, which sometimes included federal and state officials and Norfolk Southern contractors.

3.2. Data Suppression and Fraud

I later understood why CTEH was avoiding transparency. I was personally directed to use equipment and procedures that I knew would miss significant detections. While reducing monitoring sensitivity is a practice CTEH employs routinely, the way it was applied in East Palestine was unusually blatant. Detection thresholds were intentionally reduced in a way that suppressed reportable findings.

A. Measuring PPB vs. PPM Dispute and Suppression of Air Monitoring

During my time in East Palestine, one of the most frustrating and persistent issues was the disagreement between EPA and CTEH over how sensitive our air monitoring should be, specifically, whether we should measure in parts per billion (PPB) or parts per million (PPM).[92] This wasn't some technical side debate. It directly impacted what we could detect, how we interpreted the results, and whether people were told the truth about what was in the air.

The EPA initially challenged some of CTEH's environmental monitoring practices. Initially, the EPA demanded the use of instruments measuring with the higher sensitivity of PPB (parts-per-billion) instead of less sensitive PPM (parts-per-million). Existing regulations don't specify the unit EPA requires for measuring air after a chemical release. Instead, CTEH use the specific

---

[91] David Shepardson and Clark Mindock, "Norfolk Southern Agrees to Pay $600 Million to Settle Ohio Derailment Class Action Lawsuit," *Reuters*, April 9, 2024, https://www.reuters.com/legal/norfolk-settle-ohio-derailment-class-action-lawsuit-600-mln-2024-04-09/.

[92] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Hazard Communications and Safety Briefing Sheet Showing PPM Action Levels and Five-Minute Sustained Reading Requirement*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_2772.jpg.

safety guideline for each chemical (Acute Exposure Guideline Levels, Emergency Response Planning Guidelines, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry values, or Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health) and report concentrations in the units those guidelines use—commonly parts per billion (ppb) or micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m3).

The EPA initially pushed for PPB because it's significantly more sensitive and better suited for detecting low-level or long-term chemical exposures, especially in residential areas. But CTEH insisted on sticking with PPM, arguing that the equipment—like MultiRAEs and other standard monitors—was factory-set to PPM, and that changing the settings could void warranties (Exhibit 12). CTEH downplayed the difference, saying the units were "interchangeable" and that it was "just math." But it wasn't.

I remember EPA explaining that while PPM values can technically be converted to PPB, the reverse isn't always accurate. Rounding could easily mask low-level detections. For example, 1 ppm coverts to 1000 ppb. This kind of rounding created a false sense of safety for responders and residents who translate small numbers as less dangerous. In addition to missing detections because the detection limit was set too high, using ppm also falsely camouflages the health threat by 1000 times. It provided false reassurances and a false perception of safety. This is why CTEH fights so hard to use ppm.

After closed-door meetings with Norfolk Southern, CTEH and other members of Unified Command, EPA seemed to acquiesce, reducing their oversight and visibility. The result was a response environment that fraudulently appeared controlled and safe, yet failed to provide full, sensitive and accessible data to responders, government agencies or the public.

At one point, I asked about changing the MultiRAE settings to PPB to get more accurate readings. But my project manager [redacted] told me to switch it back. When I questioned the directive to test in PPM and asked about setting the equipment to PPB, I was verbally warned by my supervisor that continuing to push back could cost me my job. We were repeatedly told that CTEH used the most "conservative action levels," as if that justified using less sensitive tools.

EPA had more sensitive handheld equipment, including devices capable of detecting in PPB and even finer resolution. But those readings were rarely published or shared. I believe this was

intentional—by letting CTEH do most of the monitoring and reporting, EPA could later say, "That wasn't our data. It was the contractor's."

B. In-Home Testing – Instrument Limitations and Suppressed Accuracy

During the in-home air testing phase in East Palestine, I became increasingly concerned about the limitations of the instruments we were instructed to use - specifically, the Photoionization Detectors (PIDs) provided by CTEH, which reported measurements in parts per million (PPM).[93] Early on, the EPA made clear that their standard was parts per billion (PPB) a far more sensitive measurement appropriate for detecting low-level concentrations that could still present health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations in residential settings.

CTEH leadership was fully aware of this issue. While it wasn't acknowledged formally, it was frequently joked about, with comments like, "It doesn't matter. The chemical detections are too low. We're never going to get anything." These dismissive attitudes were common when concerns were raised about whether our instruments were capable of identifying trace chemicals at levels relevant to public health. The EPA, on the other hand, initially viewed our equipment in East Palestine as inadequate, and tensions grew between EPA and CTEH for about a month before EPA backed off.

I witnessed a marked shift when the EPA announced that they would begin conducting their own testing, using instruments that were reported in PPB. Panic quickly spread among leadership at CTEH and Norfolk Southern. Meetings were hastily convened — some scheduled, others impromptu and behind closed doors with incident command. I wasn't privy to those meetings, but I could see the urgency and stress on the faces of decision-makers. From my position in the field, it was clear that EPA was essentially signaling that CTEH's data was insufficient and possibly misleading, but we weren't privy to EPA data.

At the time, I was conducting in-home testing side by side with EPA personnel. We would often split rooms. I'd take one side; they'd take the other. If our readings were closely aligned, it would be considered acceptable. But when larger discrepancies appeared, CTEH would have us deploy GASTEC tubes as a backup method to resolve the discrepancy (Exhibit 18). These tubes change

---

[93] Government Accountability Project, "CTEH Hazard Communications and Safety Briefing Sheet Showing PPM Action Levels and Five-Minute Sustained Reading Requirement," posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_2772.jpg.

color based on the presence and concentration of certain chemicals, and while simple, they were often used in moments of disagreement to provide a third point of reference. But this wasn't reliable as GASTEC tubes can be inaccurate due to limited sensitivity, subjective color interpretation, and interference from other chemicals.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, tensions escalated. CTEH questioned the EPA's calibration process and whether their staff were trained to operate or troubleshoot their devices. In response, EPA began demanding calibration logs, bump test records, and standard operating procedures from CTEH. This back-and-forth eroded what little trust there was between CTEH and EPA, despite both groups being required to work in the same homes and maintain public confidence.

Eventually, we were instructed to limit what we shared with EPA personnel. [redacted] said that as far as any information that EPA wanted, EPA had to go through the chain of command and protocol. If EPA approached us in the field, we were told to say everything was going well and to redirect them to our chain of command rather than provide direct information. We were also told not to share the GASTEC tube results unless explicitly asked.

Despite concerns, nearly all homes were ultimately reported as "clear."[94] Why? I cannot say definitively. But from what I saw, the use of less sensitive instruments, the selective application of QA/QC standards, and pressure from higher-ups all contributed to outcomes that downplayed possible exposure. EPA later conducted their own follow-up testing independently, but we as field workers were never made aware of what those results showed — only that they were handled outside of CTEH's chain of custody.

When VOCs reached certain elevated levels during in-home testing, we were instructed to confirm that at least two workers – one CTEH and one EPA contractor - had sustained elevated readings for five minutes before taking further action[95] (Exhibit 12). We were also told to check for alternative explanations — such as candles burning or chemical products stored in closets — that might account for the spike. Once those factors were ruled out, we were directed to use

---

[94] Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), *Indoor Air Monitoring Results — East Palestine, Ohio Train Derailment*, obtained via Freedom of Information Act request, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency SEMSPUB Document No. 985346, 2023, https://semspub.epa.gov/work/05/985346.pdf.

[95] Government Accountability Project, "CTEH Hazard Communications and Safety Briefing Sheet Showing Action Levels and Five-Minute Sustained Reading Requirement," posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_2772.jpg.

GASTEC tubes to test specific chemicals like butyl acrylate and vinyl chloride. In my experience, those tubes never detected anything, even when the MultiRAE showed elevations. It never made sense to me that we would move from a more advanced instrument like the MultiRAE to the GASTEC tubes, which were far less sensitive and not designed for precise low-level detection. GASTEC tubes were cheap, easy to use, and gave immediate results of no contamination — and that seemed to be the priority.

Both are field air monitoring tools, but they work differently and measure different things.

- **MultiRAE** is an electronic multi-gas detector that uses electrochemical and photoionization (PID) sensors to continuously monitor a range of gases and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in real time. It gives immediate digital readouts and can log data over time, but it reads total VOCs rather than identifying specific compounds.
- **GASTEC** is a colorimetric detector tube system where air is drawn through a glass tube containing a chemical reagent that changes color in the presence of a specific compound. The length of the color change indicates concentration. Gastec tubes are compound-specific — you choose a tube designed for a particular chemical — making them useful for targeted spot-checking, though they are a one-time use snapshot rather than continuous monitoring.

In the East Palestine context, the key distinction is that a MultiRAE finding showing elevated VOCs tells you *something is there*, while a Gastec result for a specific compound (like vinyl chloride or benzene) tells you *what it is and at what level* at that moment — though both have limitations in complex, multi-contaminant environments like a derailment site.

I am familiar with the use of MultiRAE monitoring units for detecting gases in field conditions. Based on my knowledge and experience, these devices are generally reliable tools; however, there are several common situations in which they may report readings that are lower than the actual amount of gas present (Exhibit 19).

First, I understand that when multiple gases are present at the same time, certain gases can interfere with the sensor's ability to accurately detect the target gas. In such cases, the device may display a reading that is lower than the true concentration in the air.

Second, I am aware that temperatures can affect the performance of these devices. In colder conditions, or when the device has not been properly adjusted for temperature, the sensors may respond more slowly or less effectively, which can result in lower readings.

Third, I understand that some sensors, particularly those used to detect vapors, require the use of correction factors for specific chemicals. If these correction factors are not properly applied, the readings produced by the device may be significantly lower than the actual concentration present.

Fourth, I am aware that sensors can degrade over time and lose sensitivity. If a device is not properly maintained and regularly calibrated, it may consistently under-report gas levels.

Finally, I understand that the presence of other airborne chemicals, especially certain vapors, can interfere with the sensor's response. This interference can further contribute to readings that are lower than the actual conditions.

Based on the foregoing, it is my understanding that while MultiRAE monitoring units are useful screening tools, their readings may underestimate true exposure levels under real-world conditions, particularly in complex or uncontrolled environments[96] (Exhibit 19).

C. Unreliable Testing Equipment, Suppressed Detections & Disappearing Data

In my view, we were using improperly calibrated, sometimes faulty, and fundamentally insensitive equipment to monitor areas with known chemical hazards.[97] I also observed CTEH using several methods to downplay chemical detections including using insufficient testing equipment, elevated setting detection and reporting limits too high, not looking for the right chemicals or in the right locations and suppressing chemical detections if all other efforts to miss detections somehow failed. Other times, CTEH suppressed detections by demanding that field workers alter their reports to reflect non-detections (results below detection limits) or low detections.

---

[96] Steven Rodas, "Air Monitors Used in California Tank Crisis Were Inadequate in the Past, Leaving Returning Residents Uneasy," *Inside Climate News*, May 30, 2026, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/30052026/california-tank-crisis-air-monitoring/.

[97] Airgas, "Protocols 101: Other Calibration Gases," accessed June 25, 2026, https://www.airgas.com/solutions/specialty-gases/epa-protocol-gases/protocols-101/other-calibration-gases

Worst, if detections were somehow still captured and shared internally, the evidence repeatedly disappeared, inexplicably erased from reports. Whether because of technical limitations, internal decisions, cost concerns, or outright suppression, the approach we used compromised worker safety, misled the public, and failed to capture the true extent of risk exposure.

I personally witnessed the use of faulty and unapproved air monitoring equipment during my deployment in East Palestine. When we ran out of properly functioning instruments, often due to the high number of teams requiring monitoring, devices that were labeled for return or repair were pulled off the shelf, rigged to work, and sent back into the field. I saw this happen with my own eyes.

Drägers should have been used consistently.

Some of the most accurate readings I ever saw came from Drägers, one of the few instruments capable of reliably detecting PPB levels. I personally witnessed Drägers pick up unknown compounds at 80 to 90 PPB while PPM-calibrated instruments read zero. But even the Drägers were eventually suppressed. During my second deployment, they stopped reporting specific chemicals and instead began listing results as simply "unknown" (Exhibit 13). Early on, we were told exactly what was being detected: benzene, ethylbenzene, and others. But over time, only a few pre-approved names like vinyl chloride and butyl acrylate were allowed to appear. Everything else was hidden under that vague "unknown" label (Exhibit 13). It felt like a deliberate effort to conceal the true scope of contamination.

Even worse, when it came to do in-home testing, we weren't allowed to use Drägers at all (Exhibit 14). We were told they were reserved for "Sentinel" operations or higher-level response efforts. Inside homes where people lived and slept, we were limited to using MultiRAEs or GasTecs, despite knowing fully well that these instruments were less capable and not designed for detecting low-level environmental exposures. PIDs in particular are susceptible to environmental interference like humidity, dirt, or other gases, which made them unreliable for the kind of long-term monitoring we were doing in people's homes. Using them in PPM mode in that context made no sense. It guaranteed we'd miss a lot.

Some of us raised concerns repeatedly, asking why we wouldn't use more sensitive settings or better equipment if it was available. The answer was always the same: "This is how we've

always done it," or "It's not worth the risk to the equipment." Over time, it became clear that CTEH was more interested in defending its standard operating procedures than in improving accuracy. And speaking up came with consequences. People who asked too many questions could be pulled off the job. I'm not proud of it, but a lot of us kept our heads down just to stay employed.

At the time, no one told us about the limitations of the instruments we were using - how they could miss lower-level toxins, how environmental conditions could skew results. We believed the air was safe because that's what our equipment told us, and that's what we were told to believe. But looking back, I know they lied to us the same way they lied to the public.

In East Palestine, I personally experienced and often made efforts to document how CTEH and the EPA systematically manipulated environmental data by raising chemical detection limits, using inappropriate testing equipment, and applying unscientific parameters to restrict reporting of chemical detections—for example, requiring that chemical detections could not be reported unless confirmed by at least two technicians and sustained for at least five minutes by both technicians[98] (Exhibit 12). I often made a record of evidence by taking photographs in the field of suppressed impacts of the disaster—dead animals, chemical spills—capturing screenshots of communications with CTEH supervisors and saving internal reports (Exhibit 1, 28 & 41).

In keeping with protocol at other disaster sites, I wore a personal gas monitor (a MultiRAE) during my work in East Palestine. It consistently read zero—even when I could clearly smell strong chemical odors, which could indicate danger depending on the substance.[99] Only in rare cases did my monitor reach the "action level," but CTEH required that it would have to be sustained by two workers for five minutes before it could be written down[100] (Exhibit 12). If the

---

[98] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Hazard Communications and Safety Briefing Sheet Showing Action Levels and Five-Minute Sustained Reading Requirement*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_2772.jpg.

[99] Government Accountability Project, *Paperwork Showing Whistleblower Reporting Strong Odors, Worker Illness, and Sampling Equipment Drift and Recalibration with 'Fresh' Air in Creek Chemical Exposure Incident*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Paperwork-showed-that-Whistleblower-was-not-to-blame-for-creek-chemical-exposure-incident-Copy.jpg.

[100] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Hazard Communications and Safety Briefing Sheet Showing Action Levels and Five-Minute Sustained Reading Requirement*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_2772.jpg.

reading only lasted two or three minutes, it was dismissed and averaged with all the zeroes, resulting in artificially low exposure numbers, something like 0.00001. It was frustrating and disheartening.

In my professional judgment, the idea that a chemical exceedance at the East Palestine site has to last at least five minutes and be confirmed by two technicians before it can be reported goes against both good science and the actual safety procedures laid out in the site's Health and Safety Plan (HASP) [101] [102] [103] (Exhibit 12). The HASP makes it clear that any readings above action levels, especially from real-time monitors, require immediate evaluation and, if needed, stopping work or increasing protection. There's nothing in the HASP plan that says we should wait for an exceedance to keep going for a certain amount of time or that two people need to witness it before acting. In fact, delaying responses like that increase the risk to workers, especially since many hazardous chemicals can cause harm in just a few seconds or minutes. This kind of rule also undermines the use of properly calibrated instruments, which we have been told can capture even short-term spikes that could be dangerous. From what I saw at East Palestine and in my experience in environmental health, putting a five-minute delay and a two-person confirmation requirement in place made it more likely that real hazards were missed or ignored and that workers were at risk of chemical exposure. It's not consistent with how action levels or chemical health risks work, and it seriously weakened the site's ability to keep people safe.

D. Evacuation Ended with Flawed Process & Inadequate Equipment

On February 6, 2023, an evacuation was ordered. Local officials lifted the order on February 8 after the Environmental Protection Agency reported that air and water samples inside and outside the evacuation zone had returned to safe levels (Exhibit 16) The decision to lift the evacuation was made using air quality data that I now believe was incomplete, potentially misleading, and

---

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] American Industrial Hygiene Association, "Foundation Principles of Good Practice for Exposure Assessment", Section 2, accessed November 14, 2025, https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Get-Involved/Pages-from-AIHA-Guideline-Foundation-Principles-of-Good-Practice_Section2.pdf.

[103] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "East Palestine Train Derailment Site-Specific Health and Safety Plan", March 30, 2023, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/Health%20%20Safety%20Plan%20EPTD%2020230330.pdf.

compromised by conflicts of interest. The residents were told the air was safe, but that conclusion was based on data collection methods that many of us in the field knew were deeply flawed, limited, often manipulated.

Air samples were collected using various instruments and sent to a lab for analysis. Once the data came back, showing that air quality met safety standards, it was determined that residents could return if they avoided contaminated zones like the rail tracks and creeks which were already known to be compromised. The assumption was that, as long as locals stayed out of the active work areas, they wouldn't be exposed to hazardous conditions because the general air quality was deemed safe.

However, in my personal experience and from what I observed on site, I don't believe that relying solely on this kind of outdoor air quality testing was reliable or honest. Initial on-the-ground monitoring was mostly carried out by Norfolk Southern contractors, including CTEH while EPA did some sampling on the ground using its chemical sensing buses and aircraft.

Most of the on-ground air monitors were positioned upwind of the site, which meant that the actual contaminated air moving downwind into Pennsylvania and surrounding areas wasn't being measured because the sampling was conducted in areas not impacted by the contamination.

There were supposed to be monitors set up in downwind areas, but that either didn't happen early enough or wasn't done thoroughly. CTEH initially did test to determine where the contamination hot zones were, and they knew where the buffers blocking spread of contamination were for those zones. However, they did most of their testing outside of those buffers.[104] [105]

The CTEH in-home air monitoring results obtained through FOIA are of limited value because the handheld photoionization detectors (PIDs) used to conduct those screenings were incapable of detecting butyl acrylate below approximately 160 ppb — nearly eight times higher than the EPA's own intermediate exposure threshold of 20 ppb and more than three times higher than the 50 ppb safety threshold proposed twice by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease

---

[104] Government Accountability Project, *Letter to EPA Office of Inspector General Rebutting EPA Denial of Whistleblower Allegations*, June 27, 2024, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/06-27-2024-Letter-to-EPA-OIG-Government-Accountability-Project-Rebuttal-to-EPA-Denial-of-Whistleblower-Allegations.pdf.

[105] *Ibid.*

Registry (ATSDR). This means that results reported as non-detect or below threshold should not have been interpreted as confirmation that residents' homes were safe.

Limiting Liability Through Instrumentation Practices

In my experience working for CTEH, there has always been a strong emphasis, whether implicit or explicit, on minimizing the data that might increase liability for the responsible party. I noticed a culture of filtering or controlling how data is presented, including how detections are qualified or explained. This tendency extended into decisions about what instruments were used, how they were calibrated, and which instruments were pulled from use.

For instance, there were times I would be working in the field and smell hydrogen sulfide (H2S), and my personal H2S badge, along with others from different companies, would register elevated readings. Meanwhile, my five-gas meter, which was equipped with an H2S sensor, would only show a very low detection, which was not consistent with what we were physically experiencing or other equipment confirmed. In those cases, I would photograph the personal badge reading and include it in my documentation.[45] (Exhibit 22 & 47).

These inconsistencies seemed to be part of a broader problem. Some machines that were more "sensitive" or showed more frequent detections would be taken out of circulation. I would hear things like, “This machine is going off too much,” and next thing I knew, it was removed from the field for repair. But it never made sense to me why a machine would be pulled just for doing its job. If we’re in an environment where benzene is present and a machine is detecting benzene, why assume the detector is faulty?

Yet, machines that consistently read zero were never questioned or flagged. I found that odd. To me, it looked like the machines that did their job too well by giving accurate or frequent detections were treated as problems. I personally preferred the ones that were “too sensitive” because they gave us more data to confirm or cross-reference. But others saw that as an issue, perhaps because it made the situation appear worse or more difficult to explain away.

There are a variety of reasons discrepancies can occur. Differences in sensor ranges, lamp failures, or even just the selection of replacement parts from the bins used to stock our gear can all have impacts. But in a high-stakes environmental disaster like East Palestine, these technical gaps took on far more weight. Equipment issues became a way to cast doubt on real detections.

E. Equipment Calibration & Delayed Bump Testing Protocols

In theory, all equipment is supposed to be calibrated daily with a bump test performed to ensure accuracy. But in practice, the equipment was subject to how the data might look - not scientific integrity. That reinforced my belief that our work was being steered toward limiting liability, not uncovering the full truth.

All field monitoring equipment used during the East Palestine response was intended to be calibrated once daily, typically during the night shift, before redistribution to field personnel. Calibration involves exposing instruments to known concentrations of gas to correct sensor drift and ensure accurate readings. Following calibration, a bump test, exposing the instrument to a known analyte such as benzene was used to confirm that the device would respond appropriately and trigger alarms when required. If a device failed a bump test, it was to be recalibrated and retested; failure after a second attempt typically required removal from service.

Contrary to standard procedures, I observed multiple inconsistencies and deficiencies in both implementation and outcomes. During the early phase of the response, bump testing was not conducted at all and was only implemented weeks later after external inquiry. This delay meant that for a critical period, instruments may have been deployed without proper functional verification, even though they had undergone calibration.

Even after bump testing was introduced, calibration alone often did not reflect real-world performance. On multiple occasions, personal badge monitors would alarm for hydrogen sulfide (H2S), while corresponding multi-gas meters showed little to no detection. These discrepancies raised concerns about the sensitivity, reliability, and consistency of the instruments being used.

Additionally, I observed that equipment handling practices were not always aligned with accepted standards (Exhibit 17). Instruments that frequently detected contaminants were sometimes labeled as “overly sensitive” and removed from use, while devices that consistently read zero were not subjected to the same level of scrutiny. In situations where equipment shortages occurred, malfunctioning devices were sometimes repaired, recalibrated just enough to pass, and returned to service despite known issues.

Calibration practices themselves also presented concerns. It was usual practice at CTEH to calibrate instruments using ambient outdoor air without defined criteria for acceptable air quality, and we were told to do so by CTEH (Exhibit 17).

In general, calibrations were conducted in areas with known or suspected contamination or in the back of trucks while they were running. Calibrating in compromised environments can cause instruments to normalize to contaminated baselines, reducing their ability to detect hazardous exposures accurately (Exhibit 17).

To get an accurate reading, an instrument's "zero" has to be set using clean, certified air — what EPA calls "zero air." Federal rules (40 C.F.R. § 72.2) require that this air be virtually free of the very pollutants the device is meant to detect, so the baseline reflects true zero and not background contamination. CTEH did the opposite: its own procedure calibrated its PIDs to ordinary ambient air, which builds existing pollution into the "zero baseline" and pushes the readings down toward non-detect. (Exhibit 17)[106] [107] [108]

I understood the risks associated with inaccurate instrumentation. If monitoring equipment failed to provide reliable readings, there was no dependable way to determine whether an area was safe or whether workers and residents were exposed to hazardous chemicals. Inaccurate data may have contributed to inadequate protective measures, including failure to use respiratory protection or spending too much time in contaminated environments.

F. Post-Evacuation Home Testing

I began entering homes to conduct indoor testing only after February 8, 2023, when the evacuation order had been lifted. Prior to East Palestine, we had never gone into private homes. If we had to test on private property, like a farm, we got the owner's permission and gave them the information to call a toxicology 1-800 hotline. Residents called requesting testing, gave permission, and we would go to their property, but not inside homes. For East Palestine, the timing of conducting in-home testing struck me as wrong. Common sense tells you that homes

---

[106] Airgas, "Protocols 101: Other Calibration Gases," accessed June 25, 2026, https://www.airgas.com/solutions/specialty-gases/epa-protocol-gases/protocols-101/other-calibration-gases.

[108] Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response, 29 C.F.R. § 1910.120 (2025), accessed June 25, 2026, https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-B/chapter-XVII/part-1910/subpart-H/section-1910.120.

should be tested before families are allowed back in, but testing only started after families were already exposed.

Some residents refused to let us inside. They did not want unknown contractors to come into their homes, especially after what had just happened (Exhibit 20).

While the technical procedures of home testing were standardized, what struck me most during this phase wasn't just the numbers we recorded; it was what I observed inside the homes themselves. Once families were allowed to return after the evacuation was lifted on February 8, 2023 (Exhibit 16), I began visiting homes where I started to see patterns of illness, behavioral changes in children, and environmental concerns that went far beyond anything the instruments were reading.[109] [110] In the homes where I was allowed to test, I began to notice disturbing patterns among both adults and children. Early on, some families seemed mildly symptomatic, complaining of headaches, scratchy throats, and sinus issues. But as the weeks passed, symptoms grew worse. By the middle of March, families I visited were clearly more ill than they had been in February.

Parents would often tell me that their children had changed since the derailment. Kids who had once been energetic and active now had sudden drops in energy. Some children were coughing constantly, looking weak or tired even in the middle of the day. I asked parents if their child had just woken from a nap, only to be told that nap time was still hours away. These were not normal patterns of behavior for healthy children.

I also noticed the impact on their living spaces. Many families had left their babies or youngest children with grandparents or in hotels instead of bringing them back home. In several homes, parents had thrown out toys, blankets, or pet supplies because they didn't know what was safe to keep. I remember one boy gave me a friendship bracelet made of pipe cleaner and beads. His room was full of amazing toys, but he told me he didn't really play there anymore because his

---

[109] Government Accountability Project, *East Palestine and Pennsylvania Resident Affidavits*, August 1, 2024, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/08-01-2024-GAP-Exhibit-Packet_Affidavits.pdf.

[110] Andrew J. Whelton, "Toxic Chemicals from Ohio Train Derailment Lingered in Buildings for Months," *Ohio Capital Journal*, October 1, 2024, https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/10/01/toxic-chemicals-from-ohio-train-derailment-lingered-in-buildings-for-months/

toys may be toxic and had to be discarded. Instead, he made crafts. His mother confirmed, "He doesn't really play in there anymore due to the chemical disaster." That moment stayed with me.

The animals in these homes also seemed unsettled. Animals instinctively avoid danger, and it was obvious in some homes that pets were reacting to something in the environment.

From my perspective, these homes, especially the homes with children living in them, should have been tested and cleared long before reentry. Instead, we were testing them after exposure had already occurred. What I saw in those homes - fatigue, coughing, behavioral changes, pets avoiding certain spaces - convinced me that residents were already being harmed by ongoing contamination**.**

G. *Acronal/Acronel and spraying soil to suppress butyl acrylate*

I have personal knowledge that the Unified Command Health and Safety Plan (HASP), included the use of a chemical known as Acronal, which EPA later told the media was a typo – and that it instead used Acronel.[111] [112] [113] [114] [115] [116] During meetings I attended or was aware of, there were discussions about different methods for addressing various analytes (substances being analyzed), and Acronal was mentioned in that context. I observed the substance being applied directly to the

---

[111] Government Accountability Project, *Experts Raise Concerns After EPA Says It Used Acronel WS-27 in East Palestine*, press release, January 29, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/press/experts-raise-concerns-after-epa-says-it-used-acronel-ws-27-in-east-palestine/.

[112] Government Accountability Project, *Government Accountability Project Uncovers EPA-Backed Chemical Suppression in East Palestine Response Plan*, press release, January 13, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/press/government-accountability-project-uncovers-epa-backed-chemical-suppression-in-east-palestine-response-plan/.

[113] Lois Capps and Peter Welch letter to Tony Hayward, Chief Executive Officer, BP, June 25, 2010, regarding the Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), https://www.noozhawk.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/06_25_CAPPS_WELCH_letter_to_BP-CTEH_concerns.pdf.

[114] Jason Millman, "Lawmakers Request BP Stop Using Controversial Firm in Public Health Response." *The Hill*, June 2010. https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/164953-lawmakers-request-bp-stop-using-controversial-firm-in-public-health-response/.

[115] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Inspector General, "EPA's Emergency Response and Oversight of Contractor-Provided Data", various reports addressing contractor data transparency; see also U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, *Failure of Oversight in Industrial Disasters*, oversight summary documents (2010–2020).

[116] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "East Palestine Train Derailment Site-Specific Health and Safety Plan," March 30, 2023, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/Health%20%20Safety%20Plan%20EPTD%2020230330.pdf.

ground. I later understood that the intent of using Acronal was to break down butyl acrylate and therefore the chemical was applied topically to soil when air monitoring detected concentrations of butyl acrylate above established action levels. According to the HASP, the application of Acronal, or as EPA now has claimed, Acronel, served as a control measure intended to reduce airborne exposure from contaminated soil and to mitigate odors.

From what I know, Acronal is a styrene-acrylate polymer that's meant for controlled industrial uses—things like paints, sealants, adhesives, and waterproofing. It's not something that's designed to be sprayed out in the open, especially not onto contaminated soil during a chemical emergency. In industrial settings, it's used indoors with ventilation systems, surface controls, and full protective gear, because it can release irritating aerosols and fine particulates. So, when I saw it being used outside at a chemical disaster site, I was immediately concerned. The intent and way Acronal was used is not what it was made for.

According to the HASP, it was applied to the soil to "break down butyl acrylate" and "reduce odor." But that's not how Acronal works—it doesn't break anything down chemically. What it actually does is form a thin film over the surface, which can temporarily trap vapors and cut the smell. It might look like it's helping, but the chemicals underneath are still there. Once that film starts to break down from weather or wear, those vapors can come right back. Whether EPA used Acronal or Acronel, it gave the false impression that the problem was being dealt with, when in reality, it was just temporarily covering up the ability to detect one harmful chemical with another harmful chemical.

I looked at the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for Acronal S 400 F, and it clearly lists several hazards that make me question why it was used at an open-air disaster site like East Palestine.[117] It can cause respiratory irritation, especially when it's sprayed and becomes aerosolized, and it can also lead to skin sensitization with repeated contact. What really stood out to me, though, is that it's classified as harmful to aquatic life, both in the short and long term. That's a big deal considering how much of the soil in East Palestine was connected to nearby creeks, which were already

[117] BASF Corporation, "Safety Data Sheet: Acronal® S 400 F," revised February 2023, accessed November 18, 2025, https://www.basf.com/dam/jcr:96d6c9b0-3e29-3933-87cf-3fb759cee464/basf/www/hk/documents/en/products-industries/dispersions/construction/waterproofing/acronal-s-400f/SDS_ACRONALS400FAP200KG1H1_503.pdf.

being agitated and aerated as part of the response (Exhibit 26). If the product washed into the water, it could've created a whole different set of environmental risks. It is also classified as harmful to aquatic organisms, creating acute and chronic toxicity risks if washed into waterways—a serious concern for East Palestine.[118]

I. Pesticide Ventrilix 2L usage

I observed that vapor suppressants were not the only chemicals used during the cleanup operations. I took a photograph of the Ventrilix 2L label because I believed it could later prove important.[119] I cannot testify to the specific properties or effects of that chemical beyond what is publicly stated in its labeling and safety documentation, but I personally observed Norfolk Southern contractors routinely using Ventrilix to kill bee and wasp nests throughout East Palestine because the nests interfered with work activities.

The worksite was extensive outdoors and covered garbage, debris, brush, and overgrown land where workers were required to go. Insects were common throughout the area. Once the weather became warmer, it was a regular part of the morning safety briefings to hear supervisors remind workers, "Do NOT forget to take bug spray!" I specifically recall statements to the effect of: "If you run across a nest, just back out and call. We'll send someone to spray it if you don't have whatever to spray it with. Just don't get stung. We don't need to deal with that when we can avoid it by just spraying it. They did not want to have to report any worker medical problems or injuries to OSHA."

Based on the product labeling and Safety Data Sheets for Ventrilix 2L, I understand that diflubenzuron-containing formulations may present risks including eye and skin irritation, respiratory irritation from aerosolized exposure, and potential adverse effects involving the

---

[118] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "EPA Hazard Summary: Acrylic Polymers and Aquatic Toxicity," accessed November 18, 2025, https://epa.gov.

[119] Government Accountability Project. *Insecticide Picture 1* [photograph of Ventrilix 2L Insecticide application during East Palestine derailment remediation]. Accessed May 6, 2026. https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Insecticide-picture-1.jpeg.

blood, liver, and spleen with prolonged or repeated exposure.[120] [121] [122] I also understand that the product warnings identify significant environmental toxicity risks to aquatic organisms and non-target insects.[123]

J. Qualifying, Dismissing and Misclassification of Elevated Readings

During my time conducting indoor air testing for CTEH in East Palestine, it became clear that we weren't just documenting readings, we were qualifying them because we were instructed to add contextual details or odors to explain why elevated readings might not be related to the derailment.[124] [125] This became a standard operating procedure. If we documented a high VOC reading, we were required to note what the location smelled like, or what kind of activity took place there.

I. Legacy

Additionally, detections were misclassified as legacy or other cause to disregard a reading. Whenever air readings for Volatile Organic Compounds in the creeks spiked, which happened at least a dozen times during my deployments, Ohio EPA officials along with CTEH always said it was due to legacy contamination or another source – not attributable to Norfolk Southern.

---

[120] Innvictis Crop Care, "VENTRILIX 2L Insecticide Label," accessed May 6, 2026, https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/agrian-cg-fs1-production/pdfs/VENTRILIX_2L_Label.pdf.

[121] Innvictis Crop Care, "VENTRILIX 2L Safety Data Sheet," accessed May 6, 2026, https://innvictis.com/product/crop-care/insecticides/ventrilix-2l.

[122] Chemos GmbH & Co. KG, "Safety Data Sheet: Diflubenzuron," accessed May 6, 2026, https://www.chemos.de/import/data/msds/GB_en/35367-38-5-A0045391-GB-en.pdf.

[123] *Ibid.*

[124] Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), *Indoor Air Monitoring Results — East Palestine, Ohio Train Derailment*, obtained via Freedom of Information Act request, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency SEMSPUB Document No. 985346, 2023, https://semspub.epa.gov/work/05/985346.pdf.

[125] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Report on City Hall Filling in Hole in Map Room Before Operations*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CTEH-Report-on-City-Hall-filling-in-hole-in-map-room-before-operations-.jpeg.

Sometimes, existing contamination was blamed on Leake Oil Company on Taggart Street near the derailment, a business in the area since 1969.[126] [127]

Another time, a barrel of asbestos was found buried near the train tracks and was used again and again as an excuse for elevated chemical detections in other locations during the cleanup. Other times, a source was not identified, but still it was blamed on "legacy' contamination. As a result, elevated readings often were discarded as an unrelated outlier.[128]

"Legacy" became the magic excuse — it was used to shrug off anything that couldn't be explained, or that might suggest recent contamination. I'd hear things like, *"Oh, this is probably old stuff in the ground,"* or *"That's from the Leake Oil site,"* or *"This isn't from the derailment — they've been dumping here for decades."*

It didn't matter how high the readings were. If the numbers didn't fit the narrative, they were blamed on legacy pollution — gasoline, diesel, buried paint cans, even an old lawnmower in the creek. I remember one example where asbestos was uncovered in East Palestine — something illegally buried long ago. That find was then used to bolster the claim that everything we saw was just *more of the same old story*. But the truth is, we were finding active detections — new chemicals in real time — and they were being written off without any investigation.

I asked more than once if we could sample the area or send readings to the lab for confirmation. The answer was always "no." It was obvious our leadership, [redacted] didn't want to know the truth — they didn't want it to be anything other than "legacy." If they proved it wasn't legacy, then the client Norfolk was responsible for it, and someone would have to do something about it. So instead, they chalked up everything — even clear and dangerous exposures — to old contamination outside of our responsibility and scope to correct and moved on.

---

[126] Ohio Emergency Management Agency, "East Palestine Update – 4/10/23," accessed November 20, 2025, https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/041023-east-palestine-update?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

[127] Leake Oil Company Inc., "Better Business Bureau", accessed November 20, 2025, https://www.bbb.org/us/oh/e-palestine/profile/fuel-oil/leake-oil-company-inc-0432-1402?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

[128] Chris D'Angelo and Jimmy Tobias, "EPA Dragged Its Feet On Investigating Chemical Risk From Ohio Train Derailment, Emails Show," HuffPost, September 15, 2023, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/epa-east-palestine-derailment-dioxins-foia-emails_n_65030f7ee4b04e47fed4fa5a.

The pattern became so routine that even other workers would say it automatically: *"This is legacy," "Yeah, legacy,"* heads nodding like it was fact. It wasn't just supervisors doing it either — Ohio EPA used that word too. But to their credit, sometimes Ohio EPA pushed back and said, *"Legacy or not, we found it — it needs to be dealt with."* That's how it should be. But not everyone was on that page. For many, the "legacy" excuse was a get-out-of-jail-free card — and a way to shut down accountability.

I caught a lot of looks for pushing back. I was finding these detections, and I wasn't quiet about it. But the more I questioned, the more isolated I felt. Eventually, I realized the culture was to suppress truth — and the word "legacy" was their best tool for doing it.

II. Unrelated

We were instructed to justify any positive readings in our reports with external factors like running vehicles, freshly cut grass, household items (candles, plugins, bleach, pet waste).

We were encouraged to not document chemical smells, unusual odors, or visible signs of contamination. But whenever there were chemical detections, we were encouraged to explain those detections by attributing them to unrelated causes or odors in the environment (Exhibit 21).

When it came to stationary monitors in the community, critical sensors like H2S (hydrogen sulfide) weren't even installed, despite repeated odor complaints. I was the only one with an H2S sensor in my multi-ray unit, and it was only added after I personally requested it due to two official complaints and ongoing "rotten egg" odors. The fact that they had the sensors on site and available but withheld them was shocking and intentional.

For example, if I recorded a spike in a building where it smelled like gasoline or paint thinner—even if there were no visible sources—the reading would be chalked up to "mechanic work" or "stored paint." Even if I wasn't confident that the smell matched the environment, or if the source wasn't confirmed, these descriptors were still used to dismiss the data as unrelated to the derailment (Exhibit 21).

III. CeramFab Incident

At CeramFab, a manufacturing facility located at ground zero of the derailment and open burn, I recorded an indoor VOC reading so high that, under normal safety protocols, it would have

triggered a second evacuation of the town[129] [130] (Exhibit 30). That's how dangerous it was. I wasn't alone in feeling the effects—everyone I was with got sick. We had to take breaks and step outside throughout the assessment, and the facility had to open the garage doors just to ventilate the space enough for us to finish our work.

The cause of the elevated reading was not investigated in full. Instead, a paint thinner spill found in a supply closet, a scenario that could cause a spike in volatile organic compound (VOC) readings, was used to excuse the entire building's elevated chemical readings. That decision came from our Project Manager, [redacted]. CTEH attributed the maxed-out readings to the presence of manufacturing equipment, fuels, and stored chemicals in the building.

I didn't believe this explanation fully. I personally recorded high readings on the opposite side of the facility, more than four football fields away from the spill. But since they had one plausible explanation, however limited in scope, the data was marked as "accounted for" and therefore excluded from triggering further investigation or reporting or cleanup.

This practice created a false sense of transparency. CTEH would still "report" the number, but with a qualification that essentially neutralized it: *"Yes, we saw this—but here's why it doesn't count."* It was a bait-and-switch. It gave people, especially concerned workers and residents, a false sense that they were being told the truth, when in reality dangerous data was being systematically excused away.

The manager at CeramFab seemed visibly relieved when told the issue had been found and resolved. I could see the weight lift off his shoulders. But what if that paint thinner spill wasn't the real cause? What if something more systemic had changed in the air quality of his facility? What about the other high readings I logged far from that spill? None of those were ever explored. That haunted me.

---

[129] Stephanie Elverd, "CeramFab Files $500M Suit Against Norfolk Southern," *Morning Journal News*, November 15, 2023, https://www.morningjournalnews.com/news/local-news/2023/11/ceramfab-files-500m-suit-against-norfolk-southern.

[130] Anne Bucher, "Norfolk Southern Lawsuit Claims Derailment Destroyed Business Owner's Livelihood," *Top Class Actions*, November 20, 2023, https://topclassactions.com/lawsuit-settlements/class-action-news/norfolk-southern-lawsuit-claims-derailment-destroyed-business-owners-livelihood/.

Later, I learned that if a building like CeramFab was declared "safe" and someone got sick afterward, they were on their own. There would be no workers' compensation. No protection. If the workers didn't have paid time off, they would lose pay or lose their job. It was devastating to realize how easily elevated chemical readings could be written off and how those decisions had real consequences for workers' health and livelihood.

I got sick inside CeramFab. We all did. With me was another CTEH worker, an EPA person and a police officer escort. EPA was doing its own readings. CTEH was aggravated because EPA had an above threshold reading because their equipment was set to read at PPB so we had to get gas tubes out to resolve the discrepancy with our equipment which was not detected above the threshold. I was frustrated because at the time I did not understand why EPA was getting a reading and we weren't. I was aggravated because I thought my equipment should be getting readings as well.

The data was presented in a way that downplayed the risk to deflect responsibility. That was a turning point for me. I realized this wasn't about public safety—it was about liability.

3.3. Community & Resident Impact

A. Inspection Release Forms and Legal Concerns

During the initial stages of in-home testing, CTEH distributed legal release forms for residents to sign before allowing us to enter their homes.[131] Many locals refused to sign the releases, fearing they were unknowingly signing away their rights despite verbal reassurances from our teams. I understood and respected their caution. In fact, I admired their willingness to question the process.

These forms changed frequently, sometimes even mid-day. In the beginning, the language was heavily legalistic and, in my opinion, intentionally confusing. Some versions appeared to include releases of liability for both CTEH and Norfolk Southern, which raised significant concern among residents. Community members became suspicious, especially if they saw Norfolk

[131] Sharon Lerner. ProPublica, "The Company Helping Norfolk Southern Clean Up East Palestine Has a History of Controversial Work," last modified March 2023, https://www.propublica.org/article/east-palestine-ohio-norfolk-southern-cteh.

Southern mentioned anywhere on the document. There was a clear effort to reduce perceived liability while still gaining access.

Eventually, the forms were revised to clearly state that the homeowner was simply giving permission for entry to perform air quality testing, with no waiver of legal rights. But it took multiple versions and internal legal reviews before that clearer version was developed. I had never seen such release forms required in other testing assignments, and their inclusion in East Palestine, along with how frequently they changed, suggests that legal and public relations concerns were being prioritized over clarity and building trust with residents.

B. *Manipulation of Testing Protocols and False Sense of Safety*

There was a systematic failure, and, in some cases, outright manipulation of testing protocols related to the equipment we used in East Palestine.[132] [133] [134] I can say unequivocally that at the time neither I, nor most of my fellow CTEH coworkers, were informed of the limitations of the equipment we were using, especially the Photoionization Detectors (PIDs) that were set to parts per million (PPM) rather than the more sensitive parts per billion (PPB).[135] [136] We weren't just kept in the dark, we were made unknowing participants in misleading both the public and ourselves.

---

[132] Andrew J. Whelton et al., "Environmental and Health Risks of the 2023 Norfolk Southern Train Derailment in East Palestine, Ohio," *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* 10, no. 10 (August 2023): 779–785, https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.estlett.3c00500.

[133] Reid Frazier, "Scientist Questions EPA's Handling of East Palestine Cleanup: 'They Should Have Tested Correctly,'" *The Allegheny Front*, January 26, 2024, https://www.alleghenyfront.org/scientist-questions-epas-handling-of-east-palestine-cleanup-they-should-have-tested-correctly/.

[134] Sharon Lerner, "The Company Testing Air in East Palestine Homes Was Hired by Norfolk Southern. Experts Say That Testing Isn't Enough," *ProPublica*, March 11, 2023. https://www.propublica.org/article/east-palestine-ohio-norfolk-southern-cteh.

[135] CTEH, LLC and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Performance Assessment for the Monitoring of Butyl Acrylate and Vinyl Chloride in Air Using Honeywell PIDs: East Palestine Train Derailment," version 1.0.1 (September 8, 2023), https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-11/butyl-acrylate-pid-assessment-report-v1.0.1_0.pdf.

[136] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Hazard Communications and Safety Briefing Sheet Showing PPM Action Levels and Five-Minute Sustained Reading Requirement*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_2772.jpg.

The EPA had pushed for the use of PPB because it is more accurate for low-level or long-term exposure monitoring. But CTEH leadership insisted on sticking with PPM, telling us that our "conservative detection limits" and action levels (such as 2 PPM) were more protective than other contractors (Exhibit 12). They never told us that our instruments were fundamentally incapable of picking up lower-level toxins that PPB-calibrated equipment would detect. The public wasn't told this either.

The result was that our machines often read 0.0 or 0.01, and we took that as a sign that everything and everyone was safe. We believed it. I believed it. And I acted based on that belief. I was unknowingly giving that false sense of safety to others around me, including residents, coworkers, and volunteers. It wasn't until much later when myself, other workers and residents continue to get sick – did I stop relying on these instruments for this false sense of security. I realized too late we were not protected because our machines couldn't even detect the real levels of exposure we were facing.

When I made the statement to others that it was safe, it was not true. However, at the time I did not know neither the community nor I were unsafe. We were all lied to. I did not realize that it was a lie until EPA's results consistently did not match mine in home testing and also when the badges came back the way they did with no detections.[137] I relied on my instruments until I found out my instruments were unreliable. I took active steps to ask questions and document my experiences. Once I realized the lies, I was devastated, angry, guilty, and ashamed for my part in unknowingly spreading the lies. I focused on gathering evidence to do the right thing for the communities impacted. I knew there were risks involved in this work, but I believed in the tools and procedures we were using because we were told they were reliable. We were working 14-16 hours a day in a contaminated environment, being splashed with chemicals and breathing contaminated air. We had a right to know we were in danger. That's what our instruments are supposed to be for. But our instruments were set to levels to intentionally avoid detection of danger.

---

[137] Associated Press, "Hidden Report Reveals How Workers Got Sick While Cleaning East Palestine Creeks," *AP News*, August 14, 2024, https://apnews.com/article/east-palestine-ohio-railroad-train-wreck-epa-f2cf628d79c47e265539e98032390f3f.

Looking back, I now understand that this wasn't an isolated failure. It was part of a pattern. CTEH's internal culture is built around protecting the client and minimizing liability, not protecting workers or the public. CTEH's culture was speaking up or reporting work-related illness could cost you your job (Exhibit 1). When I became ill from my exposure, I didn't report it because I was afraid. Most of us were. And when I could no longer hide my illness, that was the end of my CTEH employment.

Even in the midst of this, there were a few good people who genuinely cared. One of my coworkers—someone I deeply respect—reached out and told me not to go through the system, but to call him directly if I needed help. He knew how the company operated, and he wanted to make sure I wouldn't get ignored or dismissed.

C. *Homes Contaminated and Avoidance of Air Filter Testing*

Another serious concern was the potential for contamination to have entered homes through their HVAC systems, especially those with central air, heating systems, or older furnaces. These systems use air filters, which can draw in outdoor contaminants and trap them indoors, especially if they were operating during or shortly after the chemical burn.

The EPA and CTEH did advise that residents should change their air filters. The logic was clear: if harmful substances were present in the outdoor air, they could have been pulled inside through the ventilation systems. This was particularly important for older homes with older furnaces that may have had minimal or outdated filtration, and in some cases, those old systems were also known for carbon monoxide risks.

I was very encouraged to learn that Scott Smith tested some of the furnace and HVAC filters that had been removed from residents' homes.[138] I wasn't happy about the fact that people hadn't changed their filters right away—but I was relieved that the used filters were still available, because they became valuable evidence of what residents may have been exposed to.

---

[138] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, email regarding surveillance of Scott Smith and furnace filter testing in East Palestine, obtained by Government Accountability Project through Freedom of Information Act request, March 21, 2023, PDF, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/3-EPA-Monitors-Scott-Smith-in-East-Palestine-Original-e-mail-EPA-FOIA-3-21-23.pdf.

Some residents, not knowing what to do with their used filters, even sealed them in plastic bags and stored them—rather than throwing them away—out of concern that they might contain harmful substances. Their instinct to hold onto the filters proved valid, especially since no widespread in-home testing had been completed before the evacuation was lifted, and these filters were one of the few ways to document possible indoor exposure.

D. Pressured to Dismiss Elevated Readings

While in East Palestine, my CTEH supervisor, [redacted] tried to pressure me into altering my in-home testing reports for two families after I detected elevated Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in their homes, but I refused.[139] Three homes next to each other that were over Sulphur Run had contaminated water entering the basements.[140] [141] A colleague and I visited one of the homes and I evaluated another. One of the homeowners opted out of testing. When I was in the two other homes that allowed us to test, water intrusion in the basements caused my air monitoring equipment and the equipment from EPA contractor Tetra Tech, Inc.to exceed action levels [142] [143] [144] (Exhibit 12).

Action levels are designated thresholds that, when reached or exceeded, require a specific response such as stopping work, increasing protective measures, or evacuating an area. They're

---

[139] Nick Evans, "Toxic Chemicals from Ohio Train Derailment Lingered in Buildings for Months," *Ohio Capital Journal*, October 1, 2024, https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/10/01/toxic-chemicals-from-ohio-train-derailment-lingered-in-buildings-for-months/.

[140] Priyanka Runwal, "Visiting East Palestine 1 Year Later," *Chemical & Engineering News* 102, no. 6 (February 26, 2024), https://cen.acs.org/environment/Visiting-East-Palestine-1-year-later/102/i6.

[141] Chris Cuomo, "East Palestine: One Year Later," *Cuomo*, NewsNation, February 3, 2024, accessed via Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/reel/C23ji0ULNSm/.

[142] Business Journal, "EPA Finds Altered Groundwater Data in East Palestine", March 2, 2026, https://businessjournaldaily.com/epa-finds-altered-groundwater-data-in-east-palestine/.

[143] *The San Francisco Standard*, "SF Settles Hunters Point Shipyard Lawsuit Over Tetra Tech Fraud for $2.5 Million," January 17, 2025. https://sfstandard.com/2025/01/17/san-francisco-hunters-point-shipyard-settlement-tetra-tech/

[144] Greg M. Schwartz, "The Gaslighting of San Francisco at the Hunters Point Shipyard," *CounterPunch*, June 14, 2026, https://www.counterpunch.org/2026/06/14/the-gaslighting-of-san-francisco-at-the-hunters-point-shipyard/.

meant to protect both workers and the public by signaling when a contaminant has reached a level that could pose a health or safety risk.

I deemed these two homes a special circumstance because they were the only homes in East Palestine where the creeks rose into the basements repeatedly, guaranteeing reoccurrence of chemical contamination. This forced Norfolk Southern to provide immediate but temporary relocation assistance to the occupants of the homes. Every time the water rose from rain or something else, contaminated creek water flooded their basements. As far as I know, these were the only homes in East Palestine that were given the "special circumstance" designation, and it was only upon my insistence.

When I first got the elevated readings, in one of the homes, I told the EPA contractor working with me that I have a solid 2 and I asked him, "What do you have?" At first, he did not answer me, he just stood there, so I asked again, "What do you have?" and he said, "Not a 2," at which point I asked again, "What do you have?" Then he said, "I have a 2-3. What do you want me to do about it?" I told him to call his supervisor immediately because I was going to call my project manager.

I told my project manager, [redacted] that he needed someone to come down here because I am getting a solid 2, a reading of 2 ppm total VOCs sustained over time. He did not like that response, so he asked me if I was sure I got that reading. He asked whether the reading was sustained for five minutes. He also said my PID might need to be recalibrated. He asked, "Did you fresh air it?" He said maybe it is malfunctioning and needs to be swapped out. He also said it might need to be cleaned. Those are the five suggestions CTEH always mentioned to dismiss detections and invalidate exceedances. This is how they justified falsifying the original exceedance and replacing it with a non-detect.

[redacted] said he was going to sample the homes with another instrument. When he arrived at the homes, along with CTEH toxicologist [redacted], they instructed me not to submit my findings yet. He said he was coming to retest with another PID. [redacted] would not enter the home. I left before [redacted] retested with a different PID monitor.

[redacted] instructed me to wait on his forthcoming test results before I submitted my report. But I went ahead and turned in my original report showing elevated airborne chemical detections

in those homes. Apparently, someone at CTEH falsified my report after I turned it in because the resident received a report showing her VOCs did not reach action levels. CTEH told the homeowners that their VOC readings were within acceptable limits. As far as I know, these were the only homes in East Palestine that were given the "special circumstance" designation, and it was only upon my insistence.

Incidentally, CTEH's results for total VOCs in homes were usually listed as less than 0.1 parts-per-million.[145] A follow-up report four days later by an EPA contractor reflected findings in ppb, showing detections between 20 and 40 ppb for total VOCs. But when specific VOCs are not identified, even an elevated reading becomes nearly meaningless from a public health standpoint. A reading that might appear reassuring could in fact represent dangerous concentrations of carcinogenic compounds such as benzene or vinyl chloride, and the failure to speciate those readings is just one-way CTEH designed environmental sampling to minimize rather than characterize the true nature of the contamination.

This false reporting by CTEH and approved by EPA occurred throughout residential homes as well as during air, sediment and creek monitoring in East Palestine. The follow up testing by EPA in the house deemed a special circumstance only occurred upon my insistence. It was not standard operating procedure. The rest of the time, EPA used CTEH data as its own to reassure residents that their homes were safe.

E. Ash from Derailment Fires – Not tested.

On or about February 15, 2023, I personally collected ash from the derailment car detonation at several residential properties located in western Pennsylvania (Exhibit 24). I have photographic evidence of both the material and the GPS-tagged location showing where I obtained the samples. These samples were collected during official in-home environmental assessments conducted as part of the East Palestine incident response (Exhibit 24).

---

[145] Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), "Indoor Air Monitoring Results — East Palestine, Ohio Train Derailment", obtained via Freedom of Information Act request, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency SEMSPUB Document No. 985346, 2023, https://semspub.epa.gov/work/05/985346.pdf.

Residents in that area contacted the home-assessment hotline for in-home testing and sampling. CTEH, not the government, ran the hotline residents were directed to call with concerns about odors, fumes, or health problems.[146] While I was at this particular home in Pennsylvania, I noticed that a grayish, metallic-looking dust had settled over homes and vehicles after the open burn of the derailed train cars containing vinyl chloride. Callers described it as an "ash" that caused irritation of their airways when disturbed. Based on those reports, our team was dispatched to conduct on-site sampling and observation.

When I arrived at the property of an elderly couple, the homeowner pointed out a fine layer of material covering both his vehicles—one an older, covered classic car and another used daily by the couple. The substance was visible on the car surfaces, grass, driveways, trees, and siding. It had a metallic sheen and appeared gray silver with slight coloration when the light hit it. The material was unusual; it wasn't the flaky, black residue typical of normal ash. Larger pieces were brittle but crumbled easily into finer dust when touched or moved by the wind.

Because the open burn had occurred several days earlier, the heavier pieces had mostly settled, while the smaller fragments had begun to disperse. I was able to collect several of the largest fragments, pieces that were still intact enough to handle without breaking apart completely. These samples were collected carefully, with the assistance of a local police escort, who provided unused police evidence bags to ensure the samples were not contaminated. Each sample was properly labeled with the address, date, and time of collection, consistent with CTEH's standard chain-of-custody procedures.

I photographed the samples both in the field and again at the Incident Command post before turning them in (Exhibit 24). I was proud of the find because, at that time, very few personnel had located any of this ash material in the field. My project manager and the on-site toxicologist were informed, and I was told to collect as much as possible, especially larger pieces, to minimize contamination from soil or debris. We believed that analysis of this material could

[146] Sharon Lerner, "The Company Testing Air in East Palestine Homes Was Hired by Norfolk Southern. Experts Say That Testing Isn't Enough," ProPublica, March 11, 2023, https://www.propublica.org/article/east-palestine-ohio-norfolk-southern-cteh.

provide crucial information about what was released during the burn and how far the plume had traveled.

After delivering the samples and completing the chain-of-custody forms, I waited several days for lab results. When no results were reported, I asked my project manager about the testing status. Instead of receiving an update, I was asked whether I had "anymore" of the ash left in my vehicle. I found this question unusual because I had already turned in all samples, fully labeled and sealed. Other team members who assisted in collection were asked similar questions.

I was then told that the samples had not been sent to the laboratory for testing. When I asked why, [redacted] told me, "no one wanted to take responsibility" for the analysis and its potential findings, and that no agency or contractor had agreed to be "responsible for the results." It was explained that testing the samples would require an entity to "own" the data and any liability associated with it. Therefore, the decision was made that the material would not be analyzed at all.

I remember being shocked and disheartened. There were approximately twenty different companies and agencies involved at the time, and not one agreed to send the samples for laboratory analysis. Someone joked that the results would have come back showing "everything," and group laughter followed the comment. I was then told directly not to mention the ash samples again because "it's better if people don't ask about that." After that, it was as though the incident never happened.

That evening, I went to the restroom at Incident Command and cried. I believed those samples could have provided answers for both Pennsylvania and Ohio residents—whether to confirm their fears or, possibly, offering reassurance. Either way, it would have been an answer supported by science. Instead, the community received none.

For me, this experience was devastating. Not sending those samples for testing denied people potentially vital information about their exposure and health risks.

After rainfall a few days later, I went back into the field and observed that the ash had disappeared, washed away from surfaces and impossible to recollect. The only opportunity for testing was lost.

There were no chain-of-custody records retained, no lab results, and no documentation acknowledging the existence of these samples after I turned them in. The only remaining proof that the collection occurred is two photographs I took that day showing the ash samples and their GPS-stamped location data.

3.4. Wildlife Deaths

I began documenting evidence early on in the response because I witnessed a number of animal deaths in East Palestine. The coverup of wildlife deaths involved CTEH, ODNR, EPA, and Norfolk Southern contractor EnviroScience (Exhibit 6).[147] EnviroScience was responsible for the initial collection and documentation—down to the genus and species of fish—and ODNR, was responsible for performing the testing.

EnviroScience employees, under Norfolk Southern's direction, participated in field activities to document the death of aquatic animals, fish and crawfish but the documentation of multiple animal carcasses and ecological damage was discouraged and suppressed. We were told during morning debriefings that we only were to publicly admit to fish and marine animal death.

We were not allowed to report any animals outside of aquatic kills. This was a first for me at CTEH, as the company also responds to calls for assistance on bird flu outbreaks and other animal deaths due to incidents, for example, animals covered in oil due to an oil spill. It all gets documented, except in East Palestine. Only small aquatic life (small fish) was allowed to be reported in East Palestine.[148] [149] There, we were not to let the public or the media know we found multiple dead animal carcasses.

When we found a dead terrestrial animal, [redacted] and other supervisors told us to quietly and literally cover it up with branches or a bag held in place with rocks before residents or the media saw it (Exhibits 28 & 29). We were then to inform ODNR or EnviroScience to remove the

---

[147] "ODNR: No Reports of Dying Animals in East Palestine," *The Review*, February 10, 2023, https://www.reviewonline.com/uncategorized/2023/02/odnr-no-reports-of-dying-animals-in-east-palestine/.

[148] Ohio EMA, "East Palestine Update – 8/03/23," Aug. 3, 2023 (quoting ODNR), https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/080323-east-palestine-update. ema.ohio.gov.

[149] Wildlife Management Institute, "Keeping an Eye on Wildlife After Ohio Train Derailment," Mar. 2, 2023, https://wildlife.org/keeping-an-eye-on-wildlife-after-ohio-train-derailment/.

dead animals. Deceased animals were stored in several large freezers allegedly for potential necropsy at the East Palestine Water Treatment Plant. Initially, there was only one freezer. Eventually, the number grew to three, all powered by external generators to maintain the required conditions. While there were fish and aquatic animals in the freezers, there must have multiple terrestrial animals stored there.

I first learned about the freezers while working alongside the wildlife recovery team with EnviroScience. On one occasion, after locating and reporting a deceased animal, I was told by one of the team members to put it in the freezer for tissue sampling. I was present at the water treatment plant and observed the freezers in use. I saw animals being stored, tagged, and cataloged for identification. While aquatic life was being openly documented and measured, the collection and storage of terrestrial animals were kept far more secret. The narrative coming from Incident Command and at public town hall meetings consistently downplayed wildlife impacts, claiming that only small aquatic life had been affected—maybe a few frogs or small fish. But I personally witnessed the collection of multiple animal carcasses (Exhibits 28 & 29).

These freezers later disappeared without notice or explanation, and ODNR publicly claimed that only "small fish and aquatic animals" had died.[150] [151] [152]

I remember returning to the site—near the water facility—while assigned to air knife duties in the creeks, and realizing the freezers were no longer there. There was no explanation, no official mention, and no follow-up. I vividly remember that moment because at first, I was hopeful. I thought maybe the samples were finally being sent off for analysis and answers. But that hope quickly disappeared when I realized no one was talking about it. There was no transfer record, no communication, and no ongoing necropsy effort that I ever heard about again. It felt like yet another quiet erasure of critical environmental evidence.

---

[150] Ohio EMA, "East Palestine Update – 8/03/23," Aug. 3, 2023 (quoting ODNR), https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/080323-east-palestine-update. ema.ohio.gov.

[151] Wildlife Management Institute, "Keeping an Eye on Wildlife After Ohio Train Derailment," Mar. 2, 2023, https://wildlife.org/keeping-an-eye-on-wildlife-after-ohio-train-derailment/.

[152] Ohio Emergency Management Agency, "East Palestine Train Derailment Update," *Ohio Emergency Management Agency*, March 8, 2023, https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/030623-east-palestine-update.

I believe the freezers were removed out of fear that the public, especially local residents and activists, would discover them and begin asking questions. Around that same time, locals had started exploring around the treatment facility, taking photos, and reportedly tampering with equipment. The response teams began clamping down on access, reinforcing that Pennsylvania – where some of the animals were collected in the wetlands - was not an official work area. But by then, it was too late—the freezers were gone, and along with them, any remaining chance to truthfully document what happened to those animals.

Based on publicly available records, I understand that Ohio wildlife officials submitted about 11 terrestrial animals — including raccoons, muskrats, and a snapping turtle — to the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory after the East Palestine derailment.[153] Those preliminary findings reportedly did not connect the derailment chemicals to the animals' cause of death.[154] Those deceased animals don't appear to have undergone a toxicology screening.[155] (Note: the necropsy report, obtained through a public records request relied on necropsy, histopathology, bacterial culture, and infectious disease testing. Throughout the report, the findings are repeatedly attributed to trauma, dehydration, emaciation, or bacterial infection, for example, the opossum's injuries were described as "compatible with a trauma episode," the songbird was diagnosed with "Negative Energy Balance," and the crow's condition was interpreted as "an acute systemic bacterial infection.")[156]

I am not aware of any publicly released records conclusively linking the deaths of those terrestrial animals to chemicals from the derailment. I also did not find any mention in the publicly available records I reviewed regarding household pets, deer or the other animals that were killed after the derailment. In my view, the publicly reported numbers significantly underestimated the number of animals that died in the days immediately following the derailment and it is disappointing to see that toxicology testing was not included in the report.

---

[153] Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, "Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory Necropsy Reports, B2303696," February 28, 2023, accessed May 12, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Animal-Disease-Diagnostic-Laboratory-Necropsy-Reports-B2303696FinalDivisi20230228-220357.pdf.

[154] *Ibid.*

[155] *Ibid.*

[156] *Ibid.*

This issue fits a broader pattern I witnessed throughout the East Palestine response: scientific data, physical evidence, and field observations that did not match the official narrative were either ignored, suppressed, or disappeared altogether. In this case, it was physical freezers full of potential proof that could have shown the true scale of harm to the local ecosystem, erased.

I learned that ODNR estimated that over 43,000 aquatic animals—among them approximately 38,222 small minnows and an additional 5,500 other species like fish, amphibians, and crayfish—were killed when toxic materials entered nearby creeks.[157] [158] The agency noted that most of those losses occurred in the first 24 hours and that no confirmed deaths of land animals (pets, livestock, or wildlife) from chemical exposure had yet been documented publicly.[159]

In March 2023, the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory claimed that final lab results on five deceased wildlife from the East Palestine area show no evidence of chemical toxicity as a cause of death. These were four raccoons and one muskrat that were submitted for analysis by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.[160] Then there was this report from the Ohio EMA, which tested four dead birds and a dead possum but also did not attribute the deaths to the derailment.[161] But after the multiple dead animals I saw hidden from the public, and the contamination I saw and experienced, these statements do not make sense.

From the very first days of my deployment to East Palestine, I witnessed widespread environmental harm and the intentional concealment of its extent. My initial assignment placed me on the wildlife team. We were responsible for identifying and recovering dead animals—

---

[157] Anna Meyer and Tyler Carey, "Ohio Department of Natural Resources Estimates over 38,000 Fish Killed Following East Palestine Train Derailment," *WKYC*, February 23, 2023, https://www.wkyc.com/article/news/special-reports/train-derailment/odnr-update-wildlife-ohio-train-derailment-east-palestine/95-6ff68dd0-fdf9-4fba-b708-059b5e27f43d.

[158] EnviroScience, "NS_OH_EastPalestine_EstimatedImpacts_Fish_Report_02.28.2023," February 28, 2023, accessed May 12, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/NS_OH_EastPalestine_EstimatedImpacts_Fish_Report_02.28.2023.pdf.

[159] *Ibid.*

[160] Ohio Emergency Management Agency, "March 17, 2023 – East Palestine Update," March 17, 2023, *Ohio EMA*, https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/031723-east-palestine-update.

[161] Ohio Emergency Management Agency, "February 23, 2023 – East Palestine Update," February 23, 2023, *Ohio EMA*, https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/east-palestine-update-022323.

primarily from creeks, drainage ditches, and wooded areas impacted by the chemical release. I immediately began documenting dead wildlife: raccoons, deer, muskrats, cats, snakes, beavers, and fish (Exhibits 28, 29, 30). On one occasion, I personally observed and photographed a dead beaver on the Pennsylvania side, and instead of initiating environmental follow-up, I was told to remain out of that zone (Exhibit 31).

I was repeatedly discouraged from photographing or reporting dead animals, particularly mammals or pets. Supervisors told us to “bag it and move on” or cover the carcass with branches if a bag was not available, especially if the public or media were nearby. Since my role on the air knife team made me highly visible—stationary and often working in the water—I was frequently exposed to cameras from local residents and journalists. This visibility increased pressure to conceal findings. Whispered instructions to "get someone here ASAP" became standard when a dead animal was found. Verbal reports were preferred over written ones, and text messages with GPS pins became my workaround to track what I could not officially document.

I developed a quiet system to continue taking photographs without submitting them to the official CTEH reporting platform to avoid getting in trouble while still collecting evidence. I would crop and forward images with location tags, so at least there was some form of record. It was not the way I wanted to work, but it allowed me to maintain some integrity in documenting what I saw. I was not trying to create trouble. I just believed the community deserved to know what was happening to their environment. What disturbed me most was the fact that agencies presenting at public town halls—EPA, CTEH, Arcadis, and others—repeatedly stated that only “small aquatic life” had been affected, even as I stood knee-deep in a creek pulling out dead animals that directly contradicted that claim.

What I witnessed in East Palestine—dead animals deliberately concealed, air and water contamination downplayed, and the public misled—was not only unethical, but dangerous. I left the assignment in May, physically ill and morally conflicted. The headaches, nausea, blurred vision, and chemical smells in my clothing and urine were constant reminders of the conditions I was working under. But even worse was the realization that, despite all the harm I saw, the official narrative insisted everything was fine. It was not.

3.5. Contamination Worsened

The Unified Command, Norfolk Southern and its contractors, coordinated efforts to suppress the truth and worsened the impact to communities and workers with intentional actions and neglect.

A. Air knifing

Air knifing is an excavation technique that uses high-pressure air to break up and displace soil.[162] [163] (Exhibit 9, 10 & 26) In East Palestine, it was used in creek beds to expose and remove contaminated sediment following the derailment. I was assigned to monitor air quality during air knifing operations, which involved disturbing sediment in the creek bed and vacuuming it up — a process that released unknown chemicals into the air. Critics raised serious concerns that the method volatilized and aerosolized toxic compounds, potentially spreading contamination and increasing worker and community exposure rather than containing it.

In all my time at CTEH, both before and after East Palestine, I never encountered air knifing at any other site. East Palestine was the only place I saw it used, and it was there that I learned why it should be avoided. What troubled me most was that our project managers, including [redacted] told us the air knifing was a public relations stunt — that it was done for show. It is my understanding that the plan originated with Norfolk Southern's contractor, Arcadis, and the EPA, who together developed the majority of the cleanup plans at East Palestine.

The air knifing being performed, where chemicals from the creeks were sprayed into the air, was a health hazard, dangerous to both the workers and the surrounding community, because it stirred up the chemicals and increased exposure. (Exhibit 8, 9 & 23).[164]

---

[162] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Air Knifing Data Summary*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Air-Knifing-Data-Summary.pdf

[163] Rich McHugh. "East Palestine Creeks Visibly Contaminated Year After Train Derailment." NewsNation, February 2, 2024. https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/east-palestine-creeks-visibly-contaminated/

[164] Government Accountability Project, *HEPACO Statement*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/HEPACO-statement.jpg.

At least a dozen times, over the course of three to four months, my air monitoring equipment alarmed while I was stationed in the creeks. These alarms meant high concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), but none of those readings ever made it into the final reports.

I always submitted my data. I marked the GPS coordinates for each elevated reading, and I made sure the logs were synchronized correctly. But every time, about two weeks later, those elevated readings would disappear from the system.

I. Sulphur Run, Evacuation Incident

One particular incident stands out. It happened at Sulphur Run, near the abandoned Leake Oil site — a location already known for historic contamination. While monitoring air quality during an air knifing operation, my MultiRae monitor maxed out for VOCs. I immediately evacuated the crew on-site and contacted my supervisors. We regrouped at the next safe egress location, upwind at Washington and Taggart Streets.

Several HEPACO workers had gotten sick during that event and told me they didn't want to continue air knifing.[122] (Exhibit 23). I reported every exposure and illness up the chain of command, including this one.

Shortly afterward, my CTEH leads, [redacted], returned with me to the site to re-monitor the area. Both [redacted] and my MultiRae monitors maxed out again. [redacted] was using a Dräger unit, which is far more sensitive and detects lower concentrations of chemicals (in parts per billion). As soon as he took a reading, he said it must be something else and immediately dismissed the result. He never showed me what the Dräger detected, and no one else ever saw those readings.

After that, Ohio EPA roped off the entire section of the creek and told us not to monitor it anymore, claiming the elevated levels were due to "legacy contamination." Not long after, they poured concrete over that portion of the creek, effectively burying it and preventing any further investigation.[165] [166]

---

[165] Christina Siceloff, Safekeeper115, "Sulphur Run Creek Cemented Over Behind Leake Oil," YouTube video, July 24, 2025, https://youtu.be/mvRJo1OpL-I.

[166] Ohio Emergency Management Agency, "East Palestine Update – 4/10/23," accessed November 20, 2025, https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/news/041023-east-palestine-update.

There was a formal meeting shortly after this event with representatives from Ohio EPA, U.S. EPA, OSHA, and the Coast Guard. Right before it began, my supervisors disappeared, leaving me alone to answer questions from all four agencies. I had to explain what happened and defend the decision to evacuate the workers, despite the fact that both of my supervisors were present when the alarms were triggered.

Meanwhile, both [redacted] and [redacted], CTEH's Exposure Scientist who had used the Dräger but withheld the actual readings, were promoted. Scott Skelton, now CTEH's Principal Exposure Scientist, created a six-figure position for [redacted] That's how CTEH operates — if you keep quiet and go along with the narrative, you're rewarded. If you speak up or try to document what really happened, you're harmed and punished.

To this day, none of the elevated air readings from Sulphur Run – or any of the other creek alarms – were reported. However, an official CTEH Air Knifing Report between February 21 and April 15, 2023 was eventually leaked to the Associated Press.[167] [168] According to the report, real-time air monitoring recorded a total of 3,047 VOC readings during this period. Of these readings, only 13 detections were reported, with concentrations ranging from 0.1 to 0.8 PPM.[169] The report claims that no detections of vinyl chloride or butyl acrylate were found in the air monitoring data and that badge sampling comprising 79 samples showed zero detections for these specific chemicals.[170] [171]

---

[167] Associated Press, "Hidden Report Reveals How Workers Got Sick While Cleaning East Palestine Creeks," *AP News*, August 14, 2024, https://apnews.com/article/east-palestine-ohio-railroad-train-wreck-epa-f2cf628d79c47e265539e98032390f3f.

[168] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Air Knifing Data Summary*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Air-Knifing-Data-Summary.pdf.

[169] CTEH, LLC, "Air Knifing Operations Assessment and Data Summary: East Palestine Train Derailment (February 21–April 15, 2023)," prepared for Norfolk Southern Railway Company, Project No. PROJ-024579, April 2023.

[170] *Ibid.*

[171] Government Accountability Project, *Performance Assessment for the Monitoring of Butyl Acrylate and Vinyl Chloride in Air Using Honeywell PIDs*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/pid-assessment-report-v1.0.1_0-EPO-Performance-Assessment-for-the-Monitoring-of.pdf.

Despite these low reported airborne detections, sediment sampling conducted in the creek bed identified the presence of at least 37 chemical compounds, including petroleum hydrocarbons and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).[172]

The buried report also documents that multiple workers experienced adverse health symptoms during air-knifing activities, including nausea, headaches, and respiratory irritation when on April 15, 2023, at least four to five workers were reported to have exhibited these symptoms, resulting in a stop-work order I issued.[173]

Based on the information in the report, there is a disconnect between the low levels of airborne chemical detections reported during the actual monitoring and the occurrence of observable health effects among workers during sediment disturbance activities.

II. Sulphur Run, Confined Space Exposure and Missing Air Monitoring Data

I was assigned to work near Sulphur Run, where there was a large culvert tunnel that channeled the creek beneath a main road (Exhibit 25). The space was physically large enough to stand in, but it still met the OSHA definition of a confined space due to its limited points of entry and uncertain air quality inside — conditions that make safe egress difficult and monitoring essential.

Before entering, I followed proper protocol by contacting my lead, [redacted], to confirm whether confined space authorization was required. I asked explicitly whether a permit was needed. He responded that it was not necessary and authorized the air knifing team and I to proceed. I then contacted my project manager, who referred me back to [redacted] I was instructed not to "bother the project manager" with questions like this. So, under that direction, we entered the space (Exhibit 25).

The conditions inside were alarming. The air was thick, stagnant, and carried a strong chemical odor. I was wearing my air monitoring equipment and began detecting elevated readings — levels that I would consider concerning under any deployment, but particularly in a confined space. The air quality inside was clearly worse than in the open creek area, which was already contaminated. Despite wearing my own respiratory protection sometimes in the creeks, I still felt

[172] *Ibid.*

[173] *Ibid.*

the physical effects. Inside that tunnel, the air quality was visibly and physically unsafe. The smell was overpowering — much worse than the open creek above. I recorded elevated readings consistent with chemical vapor exposure, and all of us experienced symptoms shortly after exiting. My teammates and I experienced headaches, dizziness, and nausea shortly after exiting the tunnel. We were visibly ill, but we had to "suck it up" and continue. We had no choice.

These symptoms were consistent with chemical exposure from vapor inhalation, and I submitted the related air monitoring data electronically as part of my assignment. After submitting those readings, I checked the system to make sure they had been logged. I knew the data could be significant. At first, I could still see them. However, when I later attempted to access that data, I could no longer find it in the system. Immediately after I asked questions about whether the elevated readings had been received and reviewed — my access was revoked. I was told I didn't need to see that data because I was "in the field" and the analytical team would handle it. That was never the policy before.

This was not an isolated experience. Many of us who became sick that day later found that our air monitoring data was missing or inaccessible, an especially alarming development given that we had entered a known high-risk area under direct instruction.

When I raised this issue, instead of receiving support, I faced scrutiny. The leadership attempted to shift blame by suggesting we had entered a confined space without proper authorization. I was specifically targeted in a morning shift change meeting where a supervisor expressed concern that we had not followed confined space protocols. I calmly responded that I had followed my chain of command, received explicit authorization, and confirmed instructions with both my lead and project manager. Despite that, the message was clear: I was being made the scapegoat for entering a hazardous space I had been told to enter.

III. Sulphur Run, Life-Threatening Event

One of the most terrifying incidents I experienced in East Palestine occurred March 20, 2023, during a period of heavy rainfall and snowmelt. That day, Arcadis turned on the water pumps causing water levels in the creeks to rise rapidly. The situation became life-threatening when pumps were turned on without notifying the teams working in the water downstream. I was in Sulphur Run, air monitoring for the air knife crew, when a sudden surge of water rushed in,

rising from just below my ankle to nearly my knees in seconds[174] (Exhibits 39 & 40). The current was so strong that one of my coworkers was almost swept off his feet. I ordered everyone to exit the water immediately, and we were only saved because other workers formed a human chain to pull us out before the current carried us into a dangerous underground tunnel system.

Three of us nearly drowned. Had we been swept further, we likely would have ended up in an oxygen-deficient, debris-filled tunnel that runs under the town. There's no way we would have survived. The force of the water was overwhelming, and the conditions were already hazardous due to chemical contamination.

When I first reported the incident, my supervisors, [redacted] told me through a group text message to make an internal "near miss" report, which - unlike an actual safety incident report - does not have to be reported to OSHA or incur fines.[175] [176] My supervisors did not want me to file an official incident report that would have to have been shared to OSHA and possibly incur fines. That is why I made sure I signed the incident report made by HEPACO.[177] I wanted it in the public record of what happened to us.

Only HEPACO responded appropriately. Their safety personnel showed up quickly, checked on us, and filed a proper report[178] (Exhibit 40). No one from CTEH came to check on us—not one person. I signed my name on HEPACO's report so there would be no erasing or ignoring what happened (Exhibits 39 & 40). I wrote down the time and circumstances, because I knew this needed to be documented officially.

---

[174] Government Accountability Project, "Text Thread Discussing Near-Miss Incident and Location," posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_6356.jpg.

[175] Government Accountability Project, *Continued Text Thread Between Whistleblower and CTEH Management Regarding Near-Miss Incident and Safety Report*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_6355.jpg.

[176] Government Accountability Project, *Continued Text Thread Discussing Near-Miss Incident and Location*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_6356.jpg.

[177] Government Accountability Project, *HEPACO Statement*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/HEPACO-statement.jpg.

[178] *Ibid.*

However, CTEH refused to file their own incident report, dismissing it as a non-issue and shifting the responsibility to HEPACO, the other contractor involved.[179] Their refusal made it clear that they wanted to avoid OSHA-reportable events or internal accountability.

After that, changes were finally made. A system was put in place where pump activations would require shared key access and advance text message warnings, giving teams time to exit the creek safely. But it should not have taken a near-drowning to force that change. And I still believe, based on the dismissive emails I received—such as one thanking me for the "stop work to collect everyone and regain focus"—that CTEH wanted this incident quietly buried (Exhibit 39).

After the incident, I received an email from their Vice President of Emergency Response [redacted] praising me for making the report and for the stop work order (Exhibit 41). But it still felt like they were minimizing the event, avoiding accountability because CTEH never filed its own incident report. Their inaction and avoidance spoke volumes about how little regard they had for worker safety. It was clear to me: they didn't want any official documentation that could lead to scrutiny, liability, or regulatory consequences.

I've never forgotten that moment, and I still carry the emotional weight of it. We were lucky that day. But had I not called the stop work order—or had our team not acted so quickly—people could have died.

B. Sinkholes

I witnessed Arcadis and HEPACO discovering one massive sinkhole and one very small one. The large sink hole was near Main Street in East Palestine and the very small one was near the truck weigh station. Both were quickly and quietly filled in before the sinkholes could fill with groundwater or be recognized by locals or reported publicly (Exhibits 5 & 48). This location was where a Norfolk Southern training center was supposed to be built before Norfolk Southern gave the land back to the Village. HEPACO was told, "Cover it up. Don't let nobody see it."

[179] Government Accountability Project, "HEPACO Statement," posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/HEPACO-statement.jpg.

Norfolk instructed that the sinkholes be filled quickly and kept out of public view. The two sinkholes I documented – one large and deep on December 10, 2023, and one small – were in different locations but close to the derailment site (Exhibits 5 & 48). It only took a few hours to fill the large sink hole. No one noticed them because they were in a remediation zone away from public view. They filled the same sinkhole using shovels and dirt from the area, and they had to use a bulldozer to fill in the larger sinkhole that was filling with water from below, so it looked like it tapped into the groundwater (Exhibit 48).

In my experience working at the East Palestine site, quietly filling in those large sinkholes without any investigation or public notice was a serious mistake. At a site contaminated with dangerous chemicals, sinkholes can let contaminants move more easily into groundwater or the surrounding environment. Being told to cover them up without proper assessment goes against everything I know about safe and responsible cleanup. It not only puts people and the environment at risk, but it also breaks trust with the community and undermines the integrity of the entire response.

I witnessed environmental response contractors—working either under EPA direction or with Norfolk Southern oversight—fill in active sinkholes using aggregate and topsoil without conducting any geophysical surveys or hydrogeologic risk assessments.[180] To my knowledge, there was no documentation, public reporting, or inclusion of these features in the site's Conceptual Site Model (CSM), as required under EPA Superfund guidance.[181] Furthermore, these actions were not disclosed in official site assessments, nor were local communities informed about the potential for groundwater contamination via karst features, which are common in the geology of eastern Ohio.

Sinkholes, especially in karst terrain, function as direct conduits between surface contamination and underlying aquifers. Failing to report and assess them violates federal standards. Specifically, EPA Region IV guidance mandates that all karst features be mapped, evaluated, and

---

[180] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Report on City Hall Filling in Hole in Map Room Before Operations*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CTEH-Report-on-City-Hall-filling-in-hole-in-map-room-before-operations-.jpeg.

[181] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Guidance for Data Quality Assessment: Practical Methods for Data Analysis* (EPA QA/G-9), EPA/600/R-96/084, July 2000; see also Superfund Program OSWER Directive 9355.0-45.

integrated into groundwater protection strategies.[182] Under federal environmental laws, responsible parties must disclose features that may influence contaminant fate and transport.[183]

Filling in sinkholes without full analysis not only obscures the extent of the contamination but may facilitate the migration of chemicals to deeper groundwater reserves or into wells serving residents. (Documents from a highly redacted USDA FOIA deem the soil at the site of the derailment "highly susceptible" to contamination.) [184]

C. Soil Excavation by Arcadis

While working in East Palestine from October 25 through early January, I directly observed Arcadis conducting deep excavation and core sampling operations around and in the former frack tank farms. These excavations went as deep as 12 feet, depending on contamination levels, with soil removed and replaced with clean fill and gravel. On one day alone, I coordinated the single largest number of soil haul-off trucks recorded on site (Exhibit 49). Yet, the cleanup was incomplete. I was tasked with monitoring a contaminated dirt pile but they only took half of it and hauled it off. They left the other half.[185] The dirt was always labeled "nonhazardous."

I remember on this one particular day, U.S. Bulk Transport hauled many trucks of soil labeled "nonhazardous" to American Landfill in Waynesburg, Ohio (EXHIBIT 49).

The landfill is a nonhazardous landfill operated by Waste Management, (another Norfolk Southern contractor). This remediation was conducted by Arcadis, with Ohio EPA periodically inspecting their work. It was a regular practice for Arcadis to take core samples in 2-foot increments. Detections of chemicals at that depth would trigger deeper excavation. These activities confirm that significant contamination had spread deeply into the ground, well beyond

---

[182] U.S. EPA Region IV, *RCRA Interim Guidance on Environmental Permitting in Karst Terrain*, 1991. This guidance is still widely referenced for remediation planning in karst-prone areas.

[183] Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq.; Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), 42 U.S.C. § 6901 et seq.

[184] Government Accountability Project, NRCS Final Determination (OPAQUE – Heavily Redacted) (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Project, 2026), https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/NRCS-Final-Determ-OPAQUE.pdf

[185] "Left Behind: Contaminated Soil," photograph, September 11, 2025, East Palestine, Ohio, Government Accountability Project, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Left-Behind-Contaminated-Soil-September-11-2025-East-Palestine.jpeg.

surface levels (Exhibit 27). The deeper the contamination, the higher the likelihood that chemicals made their way into groundwater.

D. Diesel (Benzene) Spill Cover-Up

On March 11, 2023, at approximately 4:24 p.m., I was dispatched to respond to what was initially reported as a diesel spill near 198 Taggart Road, on the Pennsylvania side of the East Palestine derailment site (Exhibits 33 & 35). The call came over the radio from a HEPACO crew member, who had been working with generators near the tracks. One of the trucks had hit a generator, cracking it and causing diesel to spill onto the ground. The spill flowed into a nearby ditch beside Track One, and given the slope of the land, there was concern it would reach the ditch leading to State Line Pond (Exhibit 34). The urgency in the radio call made it clear this was serious — the crew needed help immediately to contain the spill before it entered the water.

When I arrived, the crew was instructed to lay boom and do everything possible to contain the spill. It was a coordinated response, yet almost immediately, there was a shift in tone from urgency to denial. The area where the spill occurred was near the Pennsylvania state line at a place called State Line Pond, where beavers had been actively building a dam. Despite the proximity, supervisors and other agencies insisted that this incident had nothing to do with the surrounding area. They downplayed the event entirely and framed it as isolated and minor.

What struck me was that although we all knew it was diesel — it looked like diesel, it smelled like diesel, and it was *called in* as diesel — we were told explicitly not to use the word "diesel" in any official documentation. I received a direct phone call from my CTEH supervisor after I had noted the term "diesel spill" in our group chat. I was instructed to rephrase it, to describe only what I saw and smelled, but not to name the substance. I was told, "Do not write diesel in your documentation." When I asked why, I was told simply, "Just don't" (Exhibits 33 & 35).

It quickly became clear that the other agencies on site, including EPA and other contractors like Arcadis, were following the same unspoken directive.[186] [187] Instead of accurately describing the incident, most simply documented it as "runoff." One contractor even told me, "They told me not to write diesel," as if it were common practice. I tried to push back. I wanted to report it accurately. I wanted the community to know what they were really being exposed to. Diesel contains benzene, which poses serious health risks, and I believed it was important to name it.

But every time I attempted to document what I had actually witnessed, I faced pressure or was reprimanded. The general attitude from those in charge was that we were already taking too many hits and couldn't afford another one. So, the official story became there was no diesel, the containment didn't break, and the fluid was just rainwater or generic runoff. Another incident was erased.

It was one of many moments during the East Palestine response when I saw real environmental risks intentionally minimized or concealed. In this case, the truth was simple: diesel was spilled, containment failed, and it entered the environment (Exhibit 35). But officially, none of that ever happened.

E. Hidden or Ignored Waterways

I discovered an unnamed waterway between two frack tank farms that had been omitted from our official maps and response areas. I only found it by chance after noticing EPA activity in the area and later confirmed with a local resident who recognized it from her childhood. The omission was not accidental, the existence of this waterway was downplayed and denied. Despite visible contamination, including heavy sheen on the water's surface, this creek and other unnamed tributaries were never addressed in the remediation plan (Exhibit 36). I believe this was intentional to minimize the scope of the response.

---

[186] Rebecca Trager, "US EPA Accused of Skewing Soil Testing Data after East Palestine Disaster," Chemistry World, August 5, 2025, https://www.chemistryworld.com/news/us-epa-accused-of-skewing-soil-testing-data-after-east-palestine-disaster/4021962.article.

[187] Government Accountability Project, *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy — Assertions That East Palestine Residents Can Expect No Long-Term Health Impacts Lack Scientific Support*, March 18, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/in-the-news/new-solutions-a-journal-of-environmental-and-occupational-health-policy-assertions-that-east-palestine-residents-can-expect-no-long-term-health-impacts-lack-scientific-support/.

F. Ohio River Downstream Contamination

There was a consistent pattern of sheen sightings, chemical odors, and contamination stretching far beyond the main impact zone.[188] I personally witnessed colorful sheen and strong chemical odors in waterways miles downstream, which eventually flow into the Ohio River. A contact even shared drone footage showing the Ohio River turning yellow-orange color after the derailment.[189] Despite this, no coordinated remediation effort seemed to take place in these downstream zones. Nature does not respect state lines, but the response did. Ohio EPA was the lead agency, and Pennsylvania EPA (Region 3) remained mostly uninvolved, even though their communities were impacted as well.

G. *2025 Site Closure Contamination*

In early 2025, I was redeployed to East Palestine for what was described as the "final cleanup and site-closure phase" of the derailment response.[190] The official purpose was to help ensure that all response materials and equipment were removed and that the area was restored to pre-incident conditions. What I witnessed instead convinced me that the cleanup was never truly completed.

While in the field, I observed work crews employed by other Norfolk Southern contractors dismantling the last containment booms along the creeks. Rather than collecting and properly disposing of the contaminated sorbent material that had absorbed petroleum and chemical residues for months, I watched as workers pulled up boom and emptied it, leaving the contaminated contents behind in the ditch (Exhibit 42). The residue was visible and odorous, yet no vacuum trucks or disposal drums were present.

---

[188] Government Accountability Project, *Paperwork Showing Whistleblower Reporting Strong Odors, Worker Illness, and Sampling Equipment Drift and Recalibration with 'Fresh' Air in Creek Chemical Exposure Incident*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Paperwork-showed-that-Whistleblower-was-not-to-blame-for-creek-chemical-exposure-incident-Copy.jpg.

[189] Kenneth R. Webster, "Drone Footage of Ohio River Showing Yellow-Orange Discoloration Following East Palestine Derailment Fires," X (formerly Twitter), February 20, 2023, https://x.com/KennethRWebster/status/1627343176645201921.

[190] Government Accountability Project, "Text Thread Between Whistleblower and CTEH Supervisor Praising Completion of Work in East Palestine," posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/IMG_3006.jpg.

At the same time, near the railroad tracks and former staging areas, I saw crews breaking up visibly stained concrete that had been used for equipment washing and waste staging earlier in the response (Exhibit 43). Instead of removing the concrete for disposal, the workers chipped it into fragments, pushed the pieces into shallow depressions, and covered them with a thin layer of clean soil (Exhibit 44). There was not enough clean soil to create a proper cover; in several places, the dark-stained concrete and underlying residue remained exposed (Exhibit 45). These actions would not meet any standard definition of environmental remediation that I have ever known.

Standing there, two and a half years after the derailment, I realized that this effort to "put a bow" on the cleanup was more about appearance than restoration. The community had been told repeatedly that chemical detections were "below levels of concern," yet many residents were still reporting illnesses and environmental odors. To see a final phase carried out this way—hiding contamination rather than removing it—was deeply emotional and upsetting.

Returning to East Palestine stirred memories of everything I had seen and felt in 2023: the sickness, the secrecy, and the disbelief. I had long cried for the residents, out of sorrow and remorse for what they endured and for my own role in a response that failed to protect them.[191]

In 2025, for the first time I cried out of concern for my own health. Even after two and a half years, I experienced renewed symptoms—headaches, nausea, and throat irritation—while working near the same creeks and staging areas. It was a stark reminder that the contamination and its human toll had never truly gone away.

H. Contaminated Waste Disposal

I have significant concerns regarding the handling, transport, and potential disposal of contaminated materials generated during the cleanup of the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment (Exhibit 46). Publicly, it was represented that contaminated wastewater and related materials were transported to Lordstown, Ohio as a temporary transfer point for Norfolk Southern, prior to

---

[191] Status Coup, *"Journalist Confront Norfolk Southern in Town it Poisoned. Video Interviews Residents Who Are Sick and Suffering,"* YouTube video, accessed November 20, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGGNd6EWXTI&t=341s.

proper disposal at licensed facilities.[192] [193] [194] However, based on my observations and conversations with other personnel involved in the response, the actual handling of these materials appeared to involve a level of secrecy and inconsistency that raises serious questions.[195] [196]

Specifically, in the early stages of the response, contaminated wastewater stored in frac tanks, as well as dirt and sludge from the derailment site—which had been tested by CTEH—were transported to Lordstown, Ohio. Among CTEH personnel and contractors, this location was at times referred to as a "secondary site" for the East Palestine incident. While contaminated materials were reportedly intended for incineration at a permitted hazardous waste facility, I observed and was informed that efforts were made to offload these materials in Lordstown under unclear circumstances.

Over time, references to the Lordstown site became increasingly restricted. After several months, discussion of the site ceased entirely, and in internal meetings, personnel denied that such operations had occurred, or that materials were transported there. Based on my knowledge and experience, I believe that these materials remained contaminated at the time of those attempted disposals.

---

[192] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Norfolk Southern East Palestine Train Derailment: Interim Removal Response Waste Management Plan, Vol. 1*, April 18, 2023, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-06/NS_East%20Palestine%20IRR_WMP_4.18.2023_Vol%201-508.pdf.

[193] Nadine Grimley, "Lordstown Mayor on Waste Transfer Point: 'We Can't Stop This Now'," *WKBN*, February 2023, https://www.wkbn.com/news/local-news/east-palestine-train-derailment/lordstown-mayor-on-waste-transfer-point-we-cant-stop-this-now/.

[194] Zach Mosca, "Lordstown Landfill Not Accepting Contaminated Soil from East Palestine," *WFMJ*, February 2023, https://www.wfmj.com/story/48422913/lordstown-landfill-not-accepting-contaminated-soil-from-east-palestine.

[195] Becky Sullivan, "Here's why it's hard to clean up toxic waste from the East Palestine train derailment", NPR Environment, March 3, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2023/03/03/1160481769/east-palestine-derailment-toxic-waste-cleanup.

[196] Jen Rice, "Harris County to receive more hazardous waste from Ohio trail derailment site, Hidalgo says", Houston Chronicle, Updated February 18, 2023, https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/houston/article/harris-county-get-hazardous-waste-ohio-train-17811364.php.

3.6. Impact to Pennsylvania

It became apparent that the response effort operated as though the state of Pennsylvania did not exist. Although it was visibly affected by the derailment and contamination, the Pennsylvania side was treated as an unofficial area outside the scope of authorized work[197] (Exhibit 31). I was instructed by Unified Command and incident command leadership including EPA Region 5 and the Ohio EPA, that we had "no business being over there."

Although contamination crossed into Pennsylvania, Ohio EPA claimed authority over the entire incident—even instructing workers to report all findings on the Pennsylvania side back to Ohio. I rarely saw Pennsylvania DEP or EPA Region 3 officials involved. When they did attend meetings, they appeared to accept Ohio EPA's narrative without question. This created a regulatory blind spot that allowed contamination in Pennsylvania creeks and communities to go unaddressed.

The general attitude was that only EPA Region 5 and the Ohio EPA had authority. These agencies resisted any oversight or intervention from Pennsylvania authorities. EPA Region 5 and Ohio EPA both said they had jurisdiction, and they did not want anyone stepping in on their turf. That's what we were told by Unified Command in the incident command meetings in the mornings when EPA Region 5 and Ohio EPA gave us instructions.

State Line Park near the tracks on the Pennsylvania side used to be a huge attraction. It was a big deal. Now, since the incident, it is 100 percent dead (Exhibit 32). They killed all of the fish (Exhibit 29). Anything that was living in there died. There are no fish to fish there.

Furthermore, I witnessed clear evidence of chemical contamination being removed via vacuum trucks on the Pennsylvania side, including liquid being suctioned out from a ditch area near the creek (Exhibit 32). Despite these visible actions, the official narrative remained that Pennsylvania had not been significantly impacted. State Line Park, once a thriving ecological and recreational site, was left decimated. All aquatic life had died, and the area was functionally dead. The destruction was never fully acknowledged by Norfolk Southern or any of the

[197] "EPA Clarifies Chemicals Found, Gives Cleanup Status," *The Marietta Times*, March 2025, https://www.mariettatimes.com/news/2025/03/epa-clarifies-chemicals-found-gives-cleanup-status/.

overseeing agencies. To my knowledge, there was no transparent assessment or remediation conducted on the Pennsylvania side, and efforts to expose this damage were actively suppressed.

Destruction of Pennsylvania Wetlands and Wildlife

On multiple occasions while working near the Pennsylvania border, I personally observed the intentional destruction and disregard for sensitive wetland environments, particularly in and around State Line Pond. This area, located on the Pennsylvania side near Taggart Road, was home to diverse wildlife including a known beaver population and a pair of nesting bald eagles.[198] The beavers were repeatedly targeted because their natural behavior of rebuilding dams interfered with water flow control operations connected to the derailment site. Contractors and other personnel openly discussed plans to eliminate the beavers, with statements such as "no one will notice if we kill them." I found this deeply disturbing, as these animals were not only part of the natural ecosystem but were actively trying to survive in the aftermath of a chemical disaster.

I also recall a female volunteer, a local naturalist or Good Samaritan, who made repeated efforts to monitor the eagles that had returned to nest near the pond. Despite her dedication, she was obstructed from accessing the area and was not supported by any of the official agencies on site. She was not affiliated with a government agency but volunteered with a local animal rescue or wildlife monitoring group. From what I witnessed, Norfolk Southern and other entities involved made it clear that they did not want anyone documenting or drawing attention to the environmental damage occurring on the Pennsylvania side of the north and south tracks. Wildlife advocates were treated as a nuisance, and their concerns were dismissed or ignored entirely.

3.7. Workers Harmed

A. *Inappropriate PPE*

The site-specific Health and Safety Plan (HASP) stipulated the baseline PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) issued to nearly all site workers was classified as Level D. According to the HASP v2.0, this meant safety glasses, hard hats, steel-toe boots, and high-visibility vests (Exhibit 3 &

[198] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)," accessed August 18, 2026, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

38). Nitrile or leather gloves were listed as optional—even in the presence of hazardous chemicals such as vinyl chloride and butyl acrylate, despite these measures providing only minimal protection.[199] [200] (Exhibit 4). Level D is the lowest level of protection. It provides no respiratory protection and no chemical-resistant barrier (Exhibit 4).

Despite the presence of carcinogens, irritants, and volatile compounds, Level D was used almost everywhere. I saw crews entering contaminated creek beds, digging into chemically impacted soil, and walking through homes with VOCs present, all without proper respirators or chemical-resistant suits (Exhibit 7). This was completely inappropriate for the hazards we were dealing with.[201] [202]

I stood in areas marked as Exclusion Zones, where exposure to hazardous substances was not just possible but probable. These weren't theoretical risks—we knew what chemicals were present. Vinyl chloride, butyl acrylate, and 2-butoxyethanol were just some of the substances spilled or deliberately burned at the scene. These are chemicals known for their volatility, toxicity, and long-term health effects. Despite this, we operated under Level D—gear meant only for environments without known hazards. It *was* intentionally reckless (Exhibits 4 & 38)

Additionally, due to the suppression of real-time data, workers were not properly informed about the extent of contamination in East Palestine. The air monitoring protocols we were told to trust were not reliable. The instruments in the field didn't always reflect the true conditions, and there was growing concern among us that they were underreporting actual exposure levels.[203] Worse

---

[199] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "East Palestine Train Derailment Site-Specific Health and Safety Plan", March 30, 2023, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/Health%20%20Safety%20Plan%20EPTD%2020230330.pdf.

[200] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Butyl Acrylate PID Assessment Report v1.0.1," November 2023, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-11/butyl-acrylate-pid-assessment-report-v1.0.1_0.pdf.

[201] Paula B. Coelho et al., "Environmental and Private Property Contamination Following the Norfolk Southern Chemical Spill and Chemical Fires in Ohio," *Environmental Science: Water Research & Technology* 10, no. 11 (October 24, 2024): 3007–3023, https://doi.org/10.1039/D4EW00456F.

[202] "Failings in Response to East Palestine Train Derailment Compounded Human and Environmental Impact," *Chemistry World*, November 14, 2024, https://www.chemistryworld.com/news/failings-in-response-to-east-palestine-train-derailment-compounded-human-and-environmental-impact/4020490.article.

[203] Government Accountability Project, *Performance Assessment for the Monitoring of Butyl Acrylate and Vinyl Chloride in Air Using Honeywell PIDs*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/pid-assessment-report-v1.0.1_0-EPO-Performance-Assessment-for-the-Monitoring-of.pdf.

still, even when those thresholds were exceeded, workers weren't empowered to protect themselves.

In every other site I've worked at, workers were encouraged to wear PPE as we saw fit. If I needed a full-faced respirator in the desert or while dealing with a dust storm, no one questioned me. But at East Palestine, CTEH instructed us not to wear PPE— allegedly due to optics. (See Exhibit 3).

B. *Respirator Use Restricted for "Public-Relations Optics"*

Respiratory protection—arguably the most crucial component when dealing with airborne toxins—was not part of the standard issue. Instead, the plan claimed that any PPE greater than Level D would be "determined as needed to avoid worker exposure." Respiratory protection, including chemical-specific options, was to be "determined as needed based on air monitoring and site action levels." But in practice, these vague assurances left many of us dangerously exposed.

Federal OSHA regulations require respiratory protection during hazardous substance responses when airborne concentrations of vinyl chloride or other hazardous chemicals may exceed permissible exposure limits or otherwise pose inhalation hazards"[204] [205] However, we felt like we had no clear, accessible way to challenge the PPE we were given or to escalate concerns based on what we were experiencing in real time. I remember feeling helpless watching colleagues forced to continue working through strong chemical odors with no respiratory protection at all.[206]

At one point early on, respirators were allowed if we felt unsafe, but that quickly changed. We were discouraged from wearing them—even when we suspected contamination—because of

---

[204] Occupational Safety and Health Administration, "Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response," 29 C.F.R. § 1910.120 (2025), accessed May 12, 2026, https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.120.

[205] Occupational Safety and Health Administration, "Vinyl Chloride," 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1017 (2025), accessed May 12, 2026, https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1017.

[206] Government Accountability Project, *Paperwork Showing Whistleblower Reporting Strong Odors, Worker Illness, and Sampling Equipment Drift and Recalibration with 'Fresh' Air in Creek Chemical Exposure Incident*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Paperwork-showed-that-Whistleblower-was-not-to-blame-for-creek-chemical-exposure-incident-Copy.jpg.

public relations optics. Personnel were not permitted to wear respirators in certain situations due to concerns about public perception. If a worker put on a respirator, the local community and media would rush in, assuming there was a new threat. So, [redacted] told us not to wear respirators unless our instruments indicated it was necessary (hit action levels at sustained detection levels), even if we knew our equipment wasn't accurately detecting contamination. Subsequently, the rest of the managers and supervisors repeated [redacted] direction to not wear respirators. Optics were prioritized over health and safety both for the community and the responders.

Creek teams, including mine, worked in full public view—behind homes, along bridges, and in easily accessible areas. Whenever we donned respirators, locals would take photos and post them online, which triggered management calls demanding explanations. We were warned that wearing respirators "made people think something was wrong." The message was clear: maintain appearances, even if you feel sick. The emphasis was not on protecting workers or accurately informing the community but on avoiding images that could contradict the official claim that the air was safe.

We were instructed not to wear respirators unless our devices registered action-level readings. This was a departure from other sites, where we were permitted to wear respirators whenever doing so made us feel safe. Here, the instruction was explicit: do not use respirators unless the equipment indicated they were necessary, unless we actually hit action levels, because wearing them sent the wrong message to the community and the media tended to sensationalize such images. The concern with public relations over our safety was stated openly and directly. In my experience, this had never happened before that site, and it has not happened since. It was the first time CTEH flatly refused to allow us to protect ourselves.

It was as though our safety was secondary, an afterthought in a disaster response that should have placed it at the forefront. Leadership had the opportunity to act with integrity and caution, to protect the very people tasked with mitigating the crisis. Instead, they relied on flawed systems and empty promises.[207] We were not just under-protected; we were betrayed.

---

[207] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Health and Safety Plan V 2.0: East Palestine Derailment Response." Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, n.d. Accessed May 12, 2026. https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPURL.cgi?Dockey=P101DL03.TXT.

C. *Military Workers & [redacted]*

Many members of the military assigned to assist — including those on wildlife teams — also did not have adequate PPE[208] (Exhibit 37). This was common — and it was a moral failing by leadership. We were working in water known to be contaminated. Photos and videos sent to the public showed workers in full PPE, but in reality, many workers were under-equipped or had to rely on others to get what they needed. And even then, what we received was dangerously insufficient.

Although I didn't work directly with the National Guard, I did work alongside [redacted] woman who had a military background. As a (former) member of the National Guard, she was actively participating in the field response, including work around the contaminated waterways. [redacted] was out in the water without proper PPE, including waders, which are absolutely necessary when dealing with potentially contaminated water. I remember she had an unusually small shoe size, and most of the protective gear available—like waders—was sized for much larger men, sometimes size 13 or higher. This left her unprotected in an environment that should have required full safety precautions. I did my best to track down gear for her and eventually got her properly outfitted with my own waders, glasses and a vest. But the fact that a military-affiliated worker was put in the field without basic protection says a lot about how unprepared the operation was in terms of worker safety.

To this day, I worry about [redacted] and others like her who may have been exposed unnecessarily due to lack of PPE. I still have her contact info, and if there was ever a way to advocate for her to receive care —especially through the VA or similar, I would do it in a heartbeat. The system failed her, and I feel personally responsible for not being able to do more at the time. I am concerned about her health and if she will be told those killer words when she needs medical care from her exposure. Those three words are "not field related," which the military could say based on the official narrative about East Palestine and no long-term health impacts.

---

[208] "Former National Guardsman Recalls Being on Site During the East Palestine Train Derailment," video uploaded by "Cleared Hot Clips," YouTube, uploaded approximately April 2026 (listed as "3 weeks ago" as of May 12, 2026), accessed May 12, 2026, https://youtu.be/pPnyluKrI4o.

Recently, I learned that the Ohio National Guard in February 2023 informed military responders to the derailment that they may have been exposed to a number of chemicals including carcinogens – a warning that to my knowledge was never shared with any other workers on site (Exhibit 10).[209]

D. *Failure of Exposure Monitoring- Defective Badges or Badge Testing*

During my deployment in East Palestine, one of the most disturbing realizations I had regarding worker safety was how completely unreliable and misleading the personal exposure-monitoring program turned out to be.

All field personnel—including myself—were issued personal exposure badges intended to record contact with hazardous chemicals such as vinyl chloride, butyl acrylate, and glycol ethers. These badges were to be worn throughout the shift, sealed, and sent to a laboratory for analysis each evening. The resulting data were presented to us and to management as proof that we were working within safe exposure limits (Exhibits 22 & 47).

Yet, no matter where we worked or what we experienced in the field, the reported results always came back as "0.0 or within acceptable limits. This was true even when we were surrounded by strong chemical odors, visible rainbow and milky sheens in creeks, and dead fish along waterways such as Leslie Run and Little Beaver Creek.[210] In several of these locations, I personally documented contamination with GPS-stamped photographs and reported it to CTEH. The typical response was dismissive—"Does it smell?" or "Are there dead fish?"—and then no further action.

Despite field teams using MultiRAE instruments equipped with hydrogen-sulfide (H_2S) sensors, which sometimes alarmed during creek work, the compiled reports declared no detections for nearly all personnel. Hundreds of badges and instruments supposedly registered "non-detect"

---

[209] Dunnigan, Derek L. "Potential Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals During Response to East Palestine, Ohio Train Derailment." Memorandum for record. Ohio Army National Guard, 52nd Civil Support Team (WMD), February 9, 2023. Hosted by the Government Accountability Project. https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Memorandum-for-Record-Potential-Exposure-to-Hazardous-Chemicals-During-Response-to-East-Palestine-Ohio-Train-Derailment.pdf.

[210] Rich McHugh, "East Palestine Creeks Visibly Contaminated Year After Train Derailment." NewsNation, February 2, 2024. https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/east-palestine-creeks-visibly-contaminated/.

across the board. Only one worker, someone cutting up rail-car metal—was listed as having reached an exposure limit. Given the conditions we were working in, this claim was implausible.

Many of us were literally standing in chemical runoff, stirring it with our boots and tools, smelling acrid vapors strong enough to make us nauseated. I personally suffered from headaches, dizziness, vomiting, and chemical odors in my urine, yet the official record claimed that exposures were zero.[211] At that point I no longer believed the data being presented.

E. *Illusion of Safety*

Between the defective exposure badges, sanitized analytical data, and suppression of protective equipment use, CTEH created a false sense of security for both workers and the public. The badges served not as instruments of safety but as tools of reassurance. I now believe the continued use of these devices—despite repeated evidence of their failure—was part of a broader pattern to manufacture the appearance of safety rather than to verify it.

We breathed the same air as the residents, stood in the same contaminated creeks, and trusted data that consistently said "non-detect."[212] [213] In reality, those numbers concealed the truth of our exposure and the risks we faced every day.

At one point, after another worker accidentally dropped his badge into visibly contaminated creek water, I decided to test whether the system would record anything. I sealed that badge and submitted it for analysis. The result again came back 0.0. For weeks thereafter I intentionally dipped my own badge in contaminated water or placed crushed PVC pellets—believed to be

---

[211] Government Accountability Project, *Paperwork Showing Whistleblower Reporting Strong Odors, Worker Illness, and Sampling Equipment Drift and Recalibration with 'Fresh' Air in Creek Chemical Exposure Incident*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Paperwork-showed-that-Whistleblower-was-not-to-blame-for-creek-chemical-exposure-incident-Copy.jpg.

[212] Rich McHugh, "East Palestine Creeks Visibly Contaminated Year After Train Derailment." NewsNation, February 2, 2024. https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/east-palestine-creeks-visibly-contaminated/.

[213] Reid Frazier, "A Year Later, the Stream Flowing under Peoples' Homes in East Palestine Is Still Polluted," *The Allegheny Front*, February 2, 2024, https://www.alleghenyfront.org/east-palestine-norfolk-southern-train-derailment-stream-pollution/.

debris from the burned rail cars—inside the sample bag. Every single time, the official lab report still read zero (Exhibit 22 & 47).

Other workers, including some from HEPACO, began performing similar experiments. Their results were the same. Whether through laboratory manipulation, faulty badge design, or deliberate suppression of data, the outcome was identical: we were being told we were safe when field conditions and physical symptoms clearly said otherwise.

The combination of defective personal badges or their defective testing, selective data reporting, and restrictions on respirator use created what I can only describe as an illusion of safety.

3.8. Medical Impact to Workers

A. Widespread Symptoms Among Responders & Residents Mocked

Everyone around me was symptomatic. Workers, military personnel, contractors, police officers — we were all noticing the same things: burning eyes, coughing, hoarseness, and a constant scratchy throat. But rather than acknowledging the reality of the situation, a pattern of mocking the local residents emerged. After we became sick in that tunnel, a few of my colleagues who reported their symptoms were immediately demobilized — effectively sent home. Others were later terminated outright.

When workers got sick and went to the emergency room — or if they even admitted to being sick — they were often terminated shortly after, or simply never called back. Some were labeled "insubordinate" when they refused reassignment back to East Palestine after falling ill there. This was not limited to one contractor. Multiple companies engaged in this kind of retaliation, especially if symptoms or diagnoses could be linked to the work site.[214]

People from agencies like CTEH, Norfolk Southern, EPA, and contractors like Arcadis often dismissed or ridiculed residents' health concerns, claiming the community was trying to "milk the situation" or gain their "15 minutes of fame." Some even claimed the locals were trying to scam Norfolk Southern. The attitude was not just dismissive. It was dehumanizing.

---

[214] Government Accountability Project, "Text Message Noting Retaliation for Speaking Up," posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Text-noting-retaliation-for-speaking-up-Copy.jpeg.

B. *Personal Medical Impact*

I personally avoided going to the ER out of fear of being fired. I'd seen it happen to others. I reported symptoms internally but never sought outside medical attention until after my assignment.[215]

After the derailment, when I was first deployed to East Palestine on February 6, 2023, before the open burn, my body told me that this deployment was dangerous. I began experiencing symptoms as soon as I neared East Palestine. While still in my vehicle approaching from the Pittsburgh airport, I had to close the vents, recirculate the air, and even stop at a gas station to purge the smell from my vehicle. Those symptoms included: Burning eyes, scratchy throat, sinus irritation, headache, tingling lips, metallic taste, dry non-productive cough and shortness of breath.

During the open burn on February 6, 2023, all personnel not deemed essential were relocated 1.3 miles from ground zero to the elementary school, which was serving as Incident Command at the time. I was among those instructed to report there. They kept us away from the immediate burn area, and those who remained near the site were equipped with supplied air. But many of us who relocated to the elementary school during the open burn did not feel safe. We experienced the same immediate and unmistakable symptoms I described that I felt upon driving to East Palestine initially. These were not psychosomatic or exaggerated. The moment I stepped out of the elementary school, the air literally hit me like a wall.

I've responded to fires and explosions before. I've worked on incidents where fires burned for days. I've never experienced anything like this. It was entirely different and dangerous. As I write this statement, I still suffer from many of these symptoms and other lasting impacts of my exposure (detailed later in this statement).

Since my numerous deployments to East Palestine over the last two and a half years, I have suffered a spate of chronic health issues that I have not yet fully assessed. During these

[215] *Ibid.*

assignments, I was exposed to harmful chemicals due to inadequate PPE in violation of OSHA standards[216] [217] [218] (Exhibit 4).

As a result of the chemicals I was exposed to in East Palestine, I now suffer from multiple chronic health issues I did not have prior to this assignment. My eyes remain dry, burning, and with significantly reduced vision. I continue to experience dry peeling skin, unexplained bruising, recurring inner ear infections, dizziness, numbness in my hands and feet, and joint pain.

While I had no prior history of respiratory or chronic health problems, I developed constant brain fog, severe headaches, burning and pain in my eyes and sinuses, and a raspy voice that lasted for months. My chest often felt heavy, and I experienced shortness of breath, weakness, and nausea for months on end. My urine smelled like chemicals for months – even after I left East Palestine and I vomited every day for months. My nose, throat, and chest would burn after work in the field, and I began to feel tingling sensations in my hands and feet, which I had never experienced before. My joints became painful, and even my teeth and gums were affected, leading to the extraction of a tooth. Also, my hair started falling out and my nails became brittle.

These symptoms did not resolve after I left the site. My eyes remain dry and burning, and my vision has greatly decreased. I still suffer from dry peeling skin and random unexplained bruising. I have recurring inner ear infections, despite never having ear problems before. I have bouts of dizziness, numbness in my hands and feet, and joint pain. My doctors are evaluating me for possible ulcers.

I had never faced these health issues before my assignment to East Palestine. These ongoing medical problems have changed my daily life and, in my opinion, are a direct result of the chemical exposures and unsafe working conditions I experienced during the derailment response.

---

[216] U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, "Vinyl chloride," 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1017(g)–(h) (2023), https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/section-1910.1017 (accessed June 17, 2026).

[217] U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, "Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response," 29 C.F.R. § 1910.120, app. B (2023), https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/section-1910.120.

[218] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Health and Safety Plan (HASP) v. 2, 03-29-2023" (signed version, March 29, 2023), accessed November 18, 2025, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/HASP-v2-03292023-signed-OCR-from-whistleblower.pdf.

I have tried to get my blood and urine tested for vinyl chloride and other chemicals, but I can't get any doctors or labs to do it. I have tried to do it in Ohio, California and in other locations around the United States. Once the facility is informed who I work for and that I am a first responder, they refuse to test me. Later, I learned the CDC allegedly instructed health professionals not to test or treat East Palestine residents for chemical exposure following the Norfolk Southern derailment per a lawsuit is now claiming this amounted to a conspiracy to deny medical care to those affected.[219]

3.9. Worker Retaliation

A. Blacklisting

I witnessed a disturbing pattern that many rapid responders with CTEH are familiar with: if you speak up about safety concerns, you risk being fired or silently blacklisted (Exhibit 1). The message was clear: don't say too much, or you won't be called for the next job.[220] CTEH's rapid responders are contract-based and called in on an as-needed basis. If you gain a reputation for asking too many questions, making too many waves, or even being "difficult" — you simply stop getting calls. You don't receive an official notice or termination letter. You're just silently dropped from the deployment list. That's the blacklist. No formal write-up. No HR process. Just silence.

I've seen excellent responders pushed out this way — and I believe I've been targeted myself. After speaking up, I began to hear from people internally who "didn't want to work with me." That's fine by me. The feeling is mutual. But it speaks to a culture where raising legitimate concerns makes you a problem, not a professional.

The people punished most often are the same ones doing the riskiest work: those out in the field, near contamination, collecting real-time data in uncontrolled conditions. And the people

---

[219] Rich McHugh, "CDC Told Health Providers Not to Treat After East Palestine Derailment: Lawsuit," *NewsNation*, updated May 29, 2025, https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/cdc-health-providers-east-palestine-lawsuit/.

[220] Government Accountability Project, "Text Message Noting Retaliation for Speaking Up," posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Text-noting-retaliation-for-speaking-up-Copy.jpeg.

protected are those who keep their heads down, say nothing, and let the data — or the truth — quietly disappear.

I know this because I've seen it happen to others, and I've felt it myself. Despite my experience and professionalism, I've had people internally state they "don't want to work with me" — not because I did anything wrong, but because I refuse to stay silent when something is unsafe or unethical. That includes my former lead, [redacted], who not only misled me about confined space authorization but also attempted to publicly distance himself from the fallout. I called him out for it. I also spoke up about broader issues in East Palestine, including potential racial bias and the targeting of certain responders.

The retaliation extended to how often I was called for work after East Palestine. Before East Palestine, I was in constant demand and moved from one assignment to the next without interruption. After East Palestine, consistent deployments stopped. I would go months at a time without being called for either field or remote QA/QC work. I was forced to call CTEH myself to try to obtain deployments. The change was obvious and, in my understanding, was part of the retaliation for having spoken up.

The disparity was especially clear given my qualifications. CTEH workers enter as Level C and then receive Level B responder training; those who pass become Level B responders, while those who fail are demoted to Level D. I passed on my first attempt and held a Level B certification, in addition to a science degree. Level D responders are generally not called for work. Yet after East Palestine, CTEH was calling Level D personnel before calling me — a holder of a science degree, Level B certification, and the qualifications that go with them.

It became clear that data could disappear; personnel could be silenced, and those who raised concerns could be quietly erased from future work. It is my belief that this is an intentional pattern meant to suppress internal criticism and protect reputational interests — even at the cost of responder safety.

B. High-Exposure Assignment

After I raised concerns about elevated chemical detections in the homes, I believe I was retaliated against by being placed in known high-exposure areas in East Palestine and on subsequent assignments to other chemical release events in other parts of the country. (Exhibit 1)

These reassignments placed me in dangerous situations that threatened and impacted my health and safety.

After challenging my supervisors by insisting internally that the three homes with contaminated creek water in their basements needed to be deemed a "special circumstance," I was reassigned to the creeks (Sulphur Run) in East Palestine which were and remain highly contaminated with a stew of dangerous chemicals.[221] [222] Ever since speaking up about my concerns about CTEH in home testing for chemicals, I feel as though I was assigned to the creeks, where I oversaw Norfolk Southern contractor HEPACO workers performing remedial work, because those creeks were dangerously contaminated.[223] [224] (Exhibit 2). I viewed this assignment as retaliation because I was the only CTEH worker among the HEPACO cleanup crews in the highly contaminated creeks. That area carried the highest exposure of any part of the cleanup.

I feel as though they did not care if I got sick or died from the chemicals I was exposed to every day. Never in my career had I felt so deliberately placed in harm's way as I did in East Palestine, simply because I spoke up about dangerously high VOC levels in some homes and challenged my superiors. Meanwhile, my work partner at CTEH, who agreed with my assessment on the "special circumstance" homes, was immediately reassigned to another hostile work environment – the community. This was hostile because some of the families in East Palestine were racist, called us racial slurs, would not deal with us and even blamed me and my partner for causing the disaster, which made no sense.

---

[221] Jennifer Rodriguez, "Independent Tests Show Major Rise in Dioxin Levels in East Palestine" WKBN, August 3, 2023, https://www.wkbn.com/news/local-news/east-palestine-train-derailment/independent-tests-show-major-rise-in-dioxin-levels-in-east-palestine/.

[222] Scott Smith, *Key Testing Slides: Scott Smith Summary*, Government Accountability Project, February 1, 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Key-Testing-Slides-Scott-Smith-Summary-2-1-26.pdf.

[223] Reid Frazier, "A Year Later, the Stream Flowing under Peoples' Homes in East Palestine Is Still Polluted," The Allegheny Front, February 2, 2024, https://www.alleghenyfront.org/east-palestine-norfolk-southern-train-derailment-stream-pollution/.

[224] Rich McHugh, "East Palestine Creeks Visibly Contaminated Year After Train Derailment." NewsNation, February 2, 2024. https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/midwest/ohio-train-derailment/east-palestine-creeks-visibly-contaminated/.

C. Lost Access

At some point during my deployment to East Palestine, I lost access to project data — both my own and that of others. This had never happened to me on any previous chemical spill response I had worked on with CTEH. Under normal procedures, each deployment has a designated SharePoint site or similar data platform where responders can log in, view their submissions, and review data from other team members. This system supports quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC), where GPS coordinates, field notes, and basic data entry errors like missing decimal points can be verified and corrected. It is a vital part of maintaining integrity and accountability in the data collection process.

Initially, that system worked in East Palestine as expected. But about halfway through my time there, my access was quietly restricted — without explanation. Suddenly, I could no longer see readings I had personally submitted, GPS-tagged data entries, or even the ash sample data I had previously reviewed. When I asked for clarification, I was told simply, "Not everyone needs to have access to everything." While that may be true in theory, it made no sense in practice. I was actively collecting data in the field. I needed access not just to my own data, but to relevant team data in order to perform QA/QC functions effectively.

I later learned that this wasn't happening to me alone. Long-term employees — individuals with 8, 9, even 11 years at CTEH — also reported that they had been locked out of project data without warning. Some had to call and request access back repeatedly. They would regain access temporarily, only to lose it again without cause. Meanwhile, others who had been inactive for over a year still had uninterrupted access. The pattern was unmistakable: those of us actively collecting field data — especially those submitting elevated readings — lost access.

D. Disappearing Data

I personally documented what I observed and noted the limitations of our instruments. Unfortunately, even the documentation I entered into the system about discrepancies or decisions — such as logs noting who instructed certain tests — would later disappear. After experiencing multiple cases of data vanishing from the system, I began saving screenshots and keeping my own notes separately. But I learned the hard way that data was only safe until it conflicted with the official story.

I submitted a set of elevated air quality readings after working inside a large culvert tunnel beneath a road near Sulphur Run. I recorded elevated readings. I even created a documentation note in the system at the time, stating that my lead, [redacted] had instructed me to enter that space with the air knife team as part of my worker monitoring duties.

After submitting those readings, I checked the system to make sure they had been logged. I knew the data could be significant. At first, I could still see them. But not long after — immediately after I asked questions about whether the elevated readings had been received and reviewed — my access was revoked. I was told I didn't need to see that data because I was "in the field" and the analytical team would handle it. That was never the policy before.

A note — along with the elevated readings I submitted from inside the Sulphur Run tunnel — later disappeared completely. Not only could I no longer access them, but no one else could either. The data was just gone. I hadn't taken a screenshot because I trusted the system at the time.

In addition to those readings disappearing, I began noticing discrepancies elsewhere. On multiple occasions, my mobile device would show that I had submitted a certain number of readings — for example, 237 air quality readings — but the official system would reflect a lower number of readings collected that day. When I brought this up with supervisors, they often blamed "syncing issues" or vague technical delays. But I knew I had synced my device — repeatedly, on full bars, with strong Wi-Fi. These weren't tech issues. This was something else. Other employees for CTEH also noticed the same thing.

These situations became more frequent, especially after submitting elevated readings or inquiring about missing data. The system, which once showed exactly who touched or edited your data — allowing full transparency — now felt deliberately opaque. If something was altered or removed, we couldn't see it. We couldn't even prove it had ever been there.

Eventually, I came to understand the broader pattern: when data became politically or legally inconvenient, it disappeared. After the Sulphur Run experience, I began documenting everything on my own — screenshots, timestamps, personal notes — because it became clear that once the data becomes inconvenient, it gets erased.

IV. RACE-BASED DISCRIMINATION AND DISPARATE TREATMENT

My work partner and I were both brown-skinned. Interfacing with the white community members already had been difficult for us. We regularly encountered residents who were racist and refused to allow us to enter their homes. Some residents called us the "N" word and other derogatory names.

The racism my brown-skinned colleagues and I encountered at East Palestine was not a first for us, nor was CTEH's inadequate response to it. Earlier, while working in Shreveport, Louisiana, a resident put a sawed-off shotgun in my face and my work partner's face.[225] Rather than report the incident to my CTEH supervisors who I knew would not act on it and I contacted the local sheriff's office directly, and deputies agreed to escort us and remain on site during the air monitoring. When such incidents were reported to CTEH management, the consistent response was that this came with the territory, and that if we could not deal with it, we would be sent home. That has long been the posture at CTEH: deal with it or go home.

This dynamic carried real consequences for residents and workers. A close colleague of mine, who was Black and who died in the 2023 CTEH plane crash, once told me that if I ever spoke up about racism, they would stop calling me for assignments. He had learned this firsthand: after he raised racial mistreatment at work, his assignments were pulled and he was not called for several months. In my experience, CTEH struggles to retain people of color for this reason. The company hires few Black workers, and those it does hire are, in my observation, treated poorly and given a disproportionate share of the difficult and hazardous work, while other employees took extended breaks.

When I reported blatant racism I experienced by residents in East Palestine — including being repeatedly called slurs — I was told to put up with it or go home. Rather than address the issue, CTEH treated it as a non-issue and then flipped it as if I was the problem and cannot handle the communities I am responding to. I was told that people were simply upset, that they had been through a great deal, that we needed to be understanding, and that it would die down in time.

---

[225] Associated Press, "North Louisiana Families Evacuated after Train Derails," AP News, January 28, 2023, https://apnews.com/article/shreveport-louisiana-evacuations-8877efb11d3f0f8ef5646169174cee8f.

There was, however, a double standard. When white employees said they were afraid to enter certain neighborhoods, they were excused from doing so. This affected the testing during one of my deployments in New Jersey, where a low-income, predominantly Black neighborhood in Jersey City located next to a hydrogen fluoride release went without air monitoring for roughly two weeks, until I arrived to perform it, because white employees would not enter the community. Yet when my colleague and I had an actual sawed-off shotgun put in our faces, CTEH's position was that we should put up with it or go home, while white workers remained in the comfort of a trailer.

A colleague of mine, a project manager who shared my concerns about the locals and the ethical failures he witnessed, quit his job after East Palestine and enrolled in nursing school. He could no longer stomach working under such conditions.

In my experience, the work environment at CTEH was toxic and racially discriminatory and was further marked by nepotism. A core group of roughly fifty to sixty people stayed on because they were treated well, while the rest of the workforce turned over constantly. During my own time there, I often felt I was doing the work of several people.

V. SAME STORY - DIFFERENT TOWN – MOSS LANDING

Deployment to Moss Landing after East Palestine

At Moss Landing in Monterey County, California, CTEH was retained by the responsible party, Vistra Corp, following a lithium-ion battery energy storage system fire that resulted in community evacuations, reports of illness, and concerns regarding environmental contamination. Monterey County is widely known as the "Salad Bowl of the World" due to its vast, fertile agricultural lands that produce a significant portion of the nation's lettuce, leafy greens, fresh vegetables, and fruits. I participated in and observed aspects of the air monitoring program conducted under CTEH's Draft Community Air Monitoring, Sampling, and Analysis Plan dated February 17, 2025.[226]

[226] CTEH, LLC, *Draft Community Air Monitoring, Sampling, and Analysis Plan: Moss Landing Incident, Moss Landing, California*, prepared for Vistra Corp, February 17, 2025, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Moss-Landing-DRAFT_Community_Air_Monitoring__Sampling__and_Analysis_Plan_25-02-17.pdf.

5.2 *Unprotective Air Sampling Plan*[227]

Based on my review of that plan and my field experience, I observed the following material deficiencies:

A. **Inadequate Scope of Chemical Testing**

The monitoring plan focused on a limited set of contaminants, primarily metals (cobalt, nickel, manganese), select acid gases (e.g., hydrogen fluoride), and general categories such as total volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and particulate matter. However, critical contaminants commonly associated with lithium-ion battery fires—such as dioxins, PFAS/PFOA, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) were not included in the sampling scope. This omission significantly limited the ability to characterize the full extent of potential community exposure.

B. **Overreliance on Non-Specific and Real-Time Screening Tools**

The plan relied heavily on handheld real-time monitoring instruments and total VOC measurements, rather than compound-specific laboratory analysis. As described in the plan, field teams used instruments such as MultiRAE and DustTrak devices for "real-time" assessment of airborne contaminants. These tools are inherently limited and do not identify specific toxic compounds, thereby obscuring the presence of hazardous substances at potentially harmful levels (Exhibit 19).

C. **Use of Insufficiently Protective Exposure Benchmarks**

The monitoring strategy relied primarily on short-term, acute exposure guidelines such as Protective Action Criteria (PAC) values, Acute Reference Exposure Levels (RELs), and similar screening thresholds. No meaningful consideration was given to chronic exposure limits, cumulative risk, or carcinogenic impacts, despite the known persistence and long-term health risks associated with many combustion byproducts.

---

[227] Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health, LLC (CTEH), "Moss Landing Incident Draft Community Air Monitoring Sampling and Analysis Plan," Government Accountability Project, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CTEH-Moss-Landing-Incident-Draft-Community-Air-Monitoring-SAP.pdf.

D. **Failure to Specify or Utilize Adequate Detection Limits**

The plan did not clearly define method detection limits (MDLs) or reporting limits for laboratory-based analyses, making it impossible to determine whether testing was sufficiently sensitive to detect low-level but hazardous exposures. As identified in the technical review, this omission undermines the reliability of conclusions drawn from the data.

E. **Deficient Monitoring Location Strategy**

Monitoring locations were not consistently aligned with plume dispersion patterns or downwind exposure areas. As a result, certain communities likely impacted by airborne contaminants were not adequately sampled. This deficiency parallels issues I observed at other deployments, where monitoring placement appeared to minimize detection of elevated concentrations.

F. **Lack of Indoor, Surface, and Biomonitoring Assessments**

Despite shelter-in-place advisories issued to the public, the plan did not include indoor air sampling, surface contamination testing, or biomonitoring of exposed individuals. This represents a significant gap in assessing real-world exposure conditions.

G. **Internal Handling of Action Level Exceedances**

The plan states that when real-time monitoring detects concentrations above CTEH-defined action levels, those exceedances are communicated internally up the chain of command rather than directly disclosed to the public. Based on my experience, this internal reporting structure creates opportunities for data to be contextualized, minimized, or withheld.

H. **Observed Pattern of Unreported Exceedances**

In the course of my work across multiple CTEH deployments, including Moss Landing and other incidents, I have regularly witnessed instances in which air monitoring readings met or exceeded applicable action levels or health-based thresholds but were not formally reported to the public or were excluded from summary communications. This pattern raises serious concerns regarding transparency and the protection of public health.

In my professional opinion, the deficiencies observed at Moss Landing are not isolated but rather reflect a broader pattern in which air monitoring programs are structured and implemented in a manner that may underrepresent environmental and human health risks.

VI. FINAL STATEMENT

Why I Am Coming Forward Now, Why I Continued to Work at CTEH until recently

I am coming forward now because I can no longer stay silent. What happened in East Palestine has haunted me from the beginning. The inconsistencies, the downplaying of harm, the lies—these things have weighed on my conscience every single day. I was stuck between needing to work to survive and knowing, deep down, something wasn't right. I kept trying to convince myself, East Palestine was the exception but I realized it wasn't.

I joined this field because I believed in helping communities. I believed in protecting people. But what I witnessed shattered that belief, and I can no longer carry the burden of what I now know. At first, I genuinely believed I was doing the right thing. I thought I was helping. When I arrived in East Palestine, I trusted the equipment I was given. I trusted the company I worked for. I stood in front of residents and told them that I was standing there, that my machine wasn't alarming, and so they were safe. But I now know the machines we were given were incapable of detecting the full scope of contaminants. We were unknowingly misrepresenting the situation. We were giving people a false sense of safety.

CTEH leadership made it clear to us every morning in 6 a.m. meetings that we were not there to investigate or question anything. We were there to reassure. I was told not to share sampling numbers, not to say if it was safe or unsafe, but just to look confident. I repeated what I was told because I thought it was true. But we were misled. And that means we misled others—unintentionally, but no less dangerously.

This isn't about something that just started bothering me recently. This has weighed on me from the moment I realized the truth. I've always had a conscience. I've always had a heart for the communities I serve. But what happened—and continues to happen—is unforgivable. It's not just about today's harm; it's also about tomorrow's. The long-term impact of these exposures will not simply vanish. Residents are already experiencing cancer clusters and some of my co-workers are sick. Even if someone could promise future generations would be spared, we still

have people who are sick today.[228] [229] [230] [231] [232] [233] [234] [235] Families have lost loved ones. Lives have been turned upside down. My standard was always my mother. Would I want my mother to live here, breathe the air, work here, or eat from the crops grown here or shower in the water?

I signed up to help impacted communities. I did not sign up to deceive people.

That's not something I can live with. If someone had told me from the beginning that this job would involve misleading people and watching them suffer because of it, I would have walked away immediately. That is not who I am. I came into this work because I believed we were there to respond to emergencies and protect communities. But when I realized that wasn't what was really happening, I knew I had to start documenting what I saw. I started quietly taking photos, collecting evidence—trusting my instincts even before I fully understood why.

---

[228] Josh Christenson, "Biden Admin Admitted Chances of Cancer Affecting Ohio Residents After Train Crash Was 'Not Zero,'" New York Post, May 31, 2025, https://nypost.com/2025/05/31/us-news/biden-admin-admitted-chances-of-cancer-affecting-ohio-residents-after-train-crash-was-not-zero/.

[229] Steve Mellon, "From Brain Fog to Nosebleeds, There's a Name for What's Happening to People Affected by the Derailment," Pittsburgh Union Progress, December 19, 2024, https://www.unionprogress.com/2024/12/19/from-brain-fog-to-nosebleeds-theres-a-name-for-whats-happening-to-people-affected-by-derailment/

[230] Steve Mellon, "Hazards Unleashed by East Palestine Derailment Are 'the Worst I've Ever Seen,' Toxicologist Says." Pittsburgh Union Progress, September 18, 2024. https://www.unionprogress.com/2024/09/18/hazards-unleashed-by-east-palestine-derailment-are-the-worst-ive-ever-seen-toxicologist-says/

[231] Thompson, George. "Public Comment A-104 on Norfolk Southern Consent Decree." Letter to Department of Justice, August 21, 2024. https://semspub.epa.gov/work/05/996233.pdf.

[232] Chen, Alexander Lishuen, Jun Hee Han, and Beatrice Alexandra Golomb. "Echoes of Gulf War Illness: A Case Study of Chronic Symptoms from Toxic Exposure in East Palestine, Ohio." Annals of Case Reports 9 (2024): 2100. https://doi.org/10.29011/2574-7754.102100.

[233] Bruce Vigon, Scott Smith, and Donald Brown, "The East Palestine OH Train Disaster – A Continuing Saga of People, Ecosystems, and Places" (presentation, Breveja Environmental Consulting LLC, U.S. BioSolutions LLC, and Brown Energy and Environmental Consulting and Development, LLC, October 23, 2024), https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EPO-Presentation-2024_public.pptx.

[234] Government Accountability Project, *Whistleblower to Present Updated East Palestine Findings at SETAC North America 2025*, Press Release, October 28, 2025, https://whistleblower.org/press/whistleblower-to-present-updated-east-palestine-findings-at-setac-north-america-2025/.

[235] Abigail Bottar, "New Symptom Tracker Aims to Document Residents' Symptoms after East Palestine Train Derailment," *WVXU*, February 2, 2026, https://www.wvxu.org/2026-02-02/new-symptom-tracker-trial-aim-to-document-residents-symptoms-after-east-palestine-train-derailment.

One moment I'll never forget is when I took a picture of an ash sample. Something deep inside told me it mattered. At the time, I didn't know just how important that photo would become. But now I understand it was the beginning of me finding the courage to speak the truth.

So why did I stay at CTEH after realizing all this? The honest answer is twofold: financial survival and access to information. I grew up poor. I care for my mother and daughter. Leaving the job would have meant not only losing my financial stability, but also losing access to documents, emails, and evidence that might prove what I'm saying now. Once you're outside the system, there's no way to retrieve those things I knew the day would come when I needed to tell the truth—and I wanted to be able to back it up.

I know there's risk in coming forward, even anonymously. I've never signed an NDA, so I believe legally I can speak out. But I also know that internally, if someone wanted to retaliate, they might be able to figure out who I am based on things like the ash photo or other documentation I collected. Still, I'm not afraid for myself. I'm afraid for others—colleagues, friends, and community members who could face backlash or worsening harm if the truth continues to be buried.

Since East Palestine, I've seen these same tactics used elsewhere. I was deployed to the Vistra Plant explosion in California and the UPS airplane crash in Louisville, Ky. I saw firsthand how CTEH again avoided, dismissed, and downplayed detections in both communities. The same testing "playbook" that misled people in East Palestine is still being used today in other communities like Conyers, Georgia, Moss Landing, California and Roseland, Louisiana, all of which recently experienced massive chemical fires.[236] [237] [238] [239]

---

[236] Jamal Goss, "After Toxic BioLab Fire, Georgians Fight for Answers Before Symptoms Hit," *CBS Atlanta*, April 21, 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/atlanta/news/after-toxic-biolab-fire-georgians-fight-for-answers-before-symptoms-hit/.

[237] Steven Middendorp, "EPA Privately Warned About 'Grave Threat' in Roseland, LA Chemical Fire, Contradicting Public Statement," *The HighWire*, April 3, 2026, https://thehighwire.com/news/epa-privately-warned-about-grave-threat-in-roseland-la-chemical-fire-contradicting-public-statement/.

[238] "Louisiana Plant Fire Is 90% Contained but Evacuation Order Continues," *AP News*, August 24, 2025, https://apnews.com/article/roseland-louisiana-fire-automotive-plant-6c7b9d6cb760d8ee6ef82be014435fb0.

[239] Government Accountability Project, *CTEH Moss Landing Incident Draft Community Air Monitoring Sampling and Analysis Plan*, posted April 2026, https://whistleblower.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CTEH-Moss-Landing-Incident-Draft-Community-Air-Monitoring-SAP.pdf.

CTEH continues to be hired and continues to repeat these patterns—patterns of scientific fraud designed to minimize corporate liability while putting communities and workers at risk. And unless more of us speak out, nothing will change.

This is why I'm coming forward now. I can't undo what happened. But I can help make sure it doesn't happen again. If telling the truth can prevent even one family from suffering the way East Palestine has, then it's worth it.[240] [241]

This is bigger than me. It always has been. Speaking out is the only way I know to try to make it right.

OATH

Everything I have stated in this affidavit is true to the best of my knowledge and based on my firsthand experiences. I submit this statement under penalty of perjury because the public deserves to know what really happened in East Palestine.

I affirm that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Executed on this 19 day of AUGUST, 2026 in ~~Washington, DC.~~ KENNER, LOUISIANA PD

[Full Legal Name]

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19 day of AUGUST, 2026.

Faith E. Orsini-Calix

Notary Public

FAITH E. ORSINI-CALIX

STATE OF LOUISIANA UNION JUSTICE CONFIDENCE

FAITH E. ORSINI-CALIX
Notary Public
State of Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Notary ID # 160063
My Commission is for Life

FAITH E. ORSINI-CALIX NOTARY PUBLIC ID NO. 160063 COMMISSION FOR LIFE

[240] Maximillian Alvarez, "A Billion-Dollar Company Poisoned Their Town, Then Moved On. Now People Are Dying," *The Real News Network*, March 3, 2026, https://therealnews.com/a-billion-dollar-company-poisoned-their-town-then-moved-on-now-people-are-dying.

[241] Rich McHugh, NewsNation, "East Palestine Residents Demand Accountability 3 Years After Train Derailment Ravaged Community," YouTube video, streamed live, February 3, 2026, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcdJuUrrup0.

My Commission Expires: for life